Going through the Gospels with Jesus Christ

- Bible Study Series -

2025 by Pastor John Paul, Northumberland County, ON. Canada.
All Scripture quotations are from the Berean Standard Bible (BSB). Public domain.
This resource is dedicated to the Public Domain.

Pastor John Paul is a graduate of Moody Bible Institute with a degree in Biblical Studies.

Contents

Preface

Introduction

The Birth Announcement, Birth, Infancy and Youth of Jesus Christ

The Genealogy of Jesus Christ

The Baptism of Jesus Christ

The Temptation of Jesus Christ

Prophecies About And By Jesus Christ

Names and Titles of Jesus Christ

The Major Teachings of Jesus Christ

The Twelve Apostles of Jesus Christ

Locations of Important Events in the Ministry of Jesus Christ

Satan, Demons and Jesus Christ

The Parables of Jesus Christ

The Miracles of Jesus Christ

The Sermon on the Mount of Jesus Christ

The Transfiguration of Jesus Christ

The ‘I AM’ sayings of Jesus Christ

Nicodemus and Jesus Christ

The Samaritan Woman and Jesus Christ

The Last Supper and Upper Room Discourse of Jesus Christ

The Arrest and Trial of Jesus Christ

The Crucifixion, Death and Burial of Jesus Christ

The Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus Christ

Preface

Who is Jesus Christ? The answer to this question is the most important one of all. Jesus Himself emphasizes the importance of it, as He asks His disciples: “But who do you say I am?” (Mark 8:29). Peter affirms Jesus as the Messiah (the ‘Anointed One’) in the same verse, and this is what the series is about – to be able to (with God’s help) to make the same affirmation and turn to Christ, if you have not done so yet, while there is still time to do so.

So, we are following along the journey with Christ, as recorded in the four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John), starting with an overview of each of the four. The focus is on investigating every one of the four - from beginning to end - in order to see how God has revealed Himself to us in Jesus Christ, as recorded in the Bible.

The purpose of this series is to help you understand who Jesus Christ is (that is His identity as ‘God in the Flesh’) and why He came (that is, His mission – to atone for our sins on the cross). Jesus’ resurrection confirms His identity and mission – an event that occurred only once in human history, and will never occur again.

Finally, having understood and embraced that it is only through faith in Christ, that you can receive God’s free gift of salvation (John 3:16-21; Ephesians 2:8-9) it is my prayer for you, to turn to Jesus Christ with a repentant, surrendered, humble and obedient heart and enter an eternal, personal relationship with Him. May this be the starting point for you, whoever you are, to follow Jesus Christ – who is absolute truth (John 14:6, 15:5) and heed our Lord’s command: “Jesus told them, “This is the only work God wants from you: Believe in the one he has sent.” (John 6:29).

Yours in Christ,

Pastor John Paul
Northumberland County, ON.
Canada, 2025.

Note: Jesus’s words are in bold and italics. Verse numbers have been omitted for easier reading.

Note also: We are using the Public domain version of the Berean Standard Bible (BSB) for this Bible study series. It is best if you can use and read along in your own Bible. But, you also have the option of accessing and downloading the BSB Bible for free here: https://berean.bible/downloads.htm

Introduction

What is a Gospel?

What do we mean by ‘gospel’ and a ‘Gospel?’ The term ‘gospel’ comes from the NT Greek *euangelion* (‘to evangelize’) and originates in the Old Testament (OT) as a specific announcement, namely God’s messenger, who declares the arrival of God’s kingdom. (1) As such, the author of a ‘Gospel’ is referred to as an evangelist. This is a person who proclaims the gospel (translated as ‘good news’) which is God’s free gift of salvation to anyone who believes in Jesus Christ. (2)

The four books then (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) are referred to as Gospels and record the life and ministry of Jesus. Hereby, they present Christ, His teachings and miracles, from different theological perspectives, targeting distinctive recipients and, thus are written for specific purposes lying behind each individual Gospel. (3)

(1) T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner, eds., *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (Leicester: IVP Academic, 2000), 521.
(2) Robert H. Gundry, *A Survey of the New Testament, 5th ed.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 150.
(3) Robert H. Gundry, *A Survey of the New Testament, 5th ed.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 150-151.

Gospel Overviews
-
Overview & Distinctives (1) (2) (3)

Overview of Matthew

Author: Matthew (Levi)

Date Written: Around A.D. 60 to 65, possibly from the city of Antioch

Content: With the birth of Jesus of Nazareth; God initiates a new kingdom on earth, which is the kingdom of Heaven.
Matthew's Gospel reveals the kingdom of Heaven as a major theme and thereby pays close attention to Jesus' teachings and actions. Matthew also shows how Old Testament passages reveal the fulfillment of the above theme through the Messiah, which can be seen in his careful record of Jesus' ancestors to disclose the royal lineage.
Key events in this Gospel include the virgin birth of Jesus, Jesus' Messianic baptism, Jesus' wilderness temptation by the devil followed by His early ministry activity.
How to live life in the kingdom of Heaven on earth, is found in Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount with the *Beatitudes*.
To further reveal the kingdom of Heaven, Jesus performs miracles and also teaches in parables (stories). Matthew makes it clear that this kingdom includes both Jews and Gentiles.
The Gospel finishes with Jesus' death and resurrection, along with His command of making disciples from every nation – The Great Commission.

Readers: A Jewish-Christian community.

Purpose: To call the Jewish people to repent and obey Jesus as their promised Messiah.

Theme: Jesus Christ is Israel's Messiah, the King of the Jews.

Structure: Five parts, each containing six long sections of Jesus' ministry form the basis of the book (chapters 5-7; 10; 13; 18; 24-25).

Style: Matthew is written in as concise orderly narrative, along with some discourse sections. An emphasis on OT prophecies fulfilled in Jesus, point to Christ as the promised Messiah and "King of the Jews."

Key Verse: “The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham.” (Matthew 1:1).

Summary: In Matthew, Jesus is the Son of David (Isaiah 11:1; Matthew 1:1).
Overview of Mark

Author: John Mark

Date Written: Possibly between A.D. 55 and 65 from Rome.

Content: Mark’s Gospel emphasizes the servanthood of Jesus Christ. While not one of the twelve disciples, it is possible that Mark – as non-eyewitness – bases his account on the sermons of the apostle Peter. It is a fast-paced record, since Mark emphasizes the steady movement of Christ. Beginning the Gospel with John the Baptist and Jesus’ baptism, we learn about many particulars of Jesus’ ministry: healing the sick, driving out demons, feeding masses of people and ceaselessly helping those in need. Mark emphasizes Christ’s compassion to those on the fringe of society, as well as placing emphasis on the Lord’s actions rather than His teachings. Mark establishes that Jesus is the Son of God, as a result of the many miracles He performs. Yet, all of this points to Christ’s servanthood – a main theme in this Gospel: “For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:45). Mark’s Gospel concludes with Jesus’ death and resurrection, providing a straightforward outline of the life of Jesus Christ.

Readers: Roman Christians not familiar with Jewish religion (Mark explains Jewish customs to his readers).

Purpose: To familiarize and educate new believers in the Christian faith.

Theme: Jesus is characterized as God’s servant. At the same time, Jesus’ authority reveals that He is the Christ, the Son of God (1:1; 8:29; 15:39).

Structure: Mark arranges the events of Jesus’ ministry primarily in topical instead of chronological order.

Style: Mark’s Gospel is one of action, rather than Jesus’ teachings. The events occur ‘immediately’ – one of Mark's favorite expressions - and he records twenty miracle accounts, the most to be found in all four Gospels. In contrast, there are only two discourses, namely kingdom parables (4:1–33) and an end-time discussion (13:1-37).

Key Verse: “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.” (Mark 1:1).

Summary: In Mark, Jesus is the Son of Man (Zechariah 3:8; Mark 8:36).

Overview of Luke

Author: Luke, a Gentile physician, and companion of the apostle Paul.

Date Written: ca. A.D. 60

Content: The Gospel of Luke is based on different eyewitness accounts to Jesus Christ. Since Luke was not an eyewitness to these events – but to many of the events in the book of Acts, which he also wrote – he prepares a highly detailed account of Jesus' life. Luke is writing for a man called Theophilus (Luke 1:1-4) providing a universal perspective of Jesus' life and ministry. Luke emphasizes Jesus' interest for outcasts and marginalized people, including women and the poor. The gospel also focuses on the role of the Holy Spirit. Given his disposition towards details, Luke provides specific dates for the events in this account. Also, this is the only gospel that records the activity prior to Jesus' conception along with His birth and early childhood years. The outline of Jesus' ministry is similar to the Gospels of Mathew and Mark. Luke adds an elaborate travel narrative of Jesus' journey to Jerusalem (Luke 9:51-19:41). The Gospel closes with Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension with Christ's command to the disciples to wait for the arrival of the promised Holy Spirit (Luke 24:49).

Readers: Greek-oriented Christians

Purpose: To help a Greek Christian, Theophilus, and others to grow in their faith walk with Jesus.

Theme: We can trust in Jesus Christ, because God Himself has come as 'God in the Flesh,' as Messiah, offering salvation to all who believe in Him.

Structure: While some clear divisions exist (1:5; 3:1; 9:51) it is challenging, if not arbitrary to establish a structure. Chapters 1 and 2 can be seen as introduction, 3:1-4:13 linking the ministries of Jesus and John the Baptist. Thereafter, a threefold partition is possible: One, Jesus teaches and heals in Galilee (4:14-9:50). Two, Jesus' "travel narrative" takes place (9:51-19:45). Three, Jesus is rejected by the Jewish authorities and crucified, followed by the longest resurrection account of all four Gospels (19:45-24:53).

Style: The longest of all Gospels, Luke blends together Jesus' teaching, miracles, along with more parables than in any other gospel. It is the most

detailed nativity narrative and there is a break, culminating in Jesus' resolute journey from Galilee to Jerusalem (9:52-19:44).

Key Verse: "Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which are most surely believed among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account." (Luke 1:1-3).

Summary: In Luke, He is the Son of Adam. (Zechariah 6:12; Luke 3:38)

Note: Luke is also the author of Book of Acts. Here he continues the beginning of the early Christian church, the work of the Holy Spirit and God bringing the gospel into all the world. Acts is the second part of Luke's writing and Luke-Acts can be seen as a simple complete work.

Overview of John

Author: The apostle John, son of Zebedee

Date Written: probably around A.D. 90 from the city of Ephesus

Content: In contrast to the other gospels, which primarily emphasize a theological purpose, only John plainly state his purpose:

"But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life by the power of his name." (John 20:31)

With this specific aim, John's Gospel provides a text, unlike the other three accounts. John is interested in what Jesus' actions say and reveal about Him; thereby referring to Christ's miracles as "signs." He organises his gospel

around these “signs,” which include Jesus’ seven “I am” statement, He reveals about Himself.

The Gospel begins with the pre-existent Christ, “the Word,” that is the unique Son of God – who takes on human flesh, in order to reveal God the Father to mankind. Following the testimony of John the Baptist, John recounts Jesus’ baptism. Thereafter, this Gospel rearranges some events and also adds different material. As such John, records several trips of Jesus to Jerusalem, distinguishing his account from the other Gospels. John renders Jesus’ Last Supper with his disciples at length, followed by recording Jesus’ crucifixion and resurrection. John’s Gospel concludes with encounters between Jesus Christ and his disciples.

Readers: Jewish readers outside the Holy Land and Jewish proselytes.

Purpose: To bring people everywhere to faith in Jesus Christ.

Theme: Eternal, everlasting life is available now (5:24-26) to all who come to know God - the Father – through Jesus Christ – who is eternal life (17:3).

Structure: John arranges his gospel centered around seven signs (miracles) of Jesus. About half of the Gospel records the final week of Jesus’ life, death and resurrection.

Style: Composed in simple Greek, using a limited vocabulary, the emphasis is on Jesus’ “I am” sayings, pointing to His divinity.

Key Verse: “And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name.” (John 20:30, 31).

Summary: In John, Jesus is the Son of God (Isaiah 4:2; 7:14; John 3:16).

Note: John does not record the casting out of demons, nor the transfiguration event, and there are no parables. Instead, John emphasizes Jesus’ promise of the Holy Spirit (14:16-18’ 26; 15:26; 16:7-14; 20:22), which is then fulfilled - following Christ’s ascension in Acts 2.

(1) Adapted from NLT, Tyndale House, p.1513. ok. *Holy Bible NLT*. 2nd Ed. Carol Stream: Tyndale House Publishers, 2007, p.1513, 1572, 1610, 1672.

(2) Adapted from Don Stewart, “Why are there four Gospels,” accessed, March 21, 2024,

https://www.blueletterbible.org/faq/don_stewart/don_stewart_188.cfm.

(3) Adapted from Wayne Grudem, ed., *ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008), 1811-1813.

Jesus Christ - Birth Announcement, Birth, Infancy and Youth

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: “Behold, the virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call Him Immanuel” (which means, “God with us”).
Matthew 1:22–23 (BSB)

Introduction:

What is it that makes Jesus Christ unique? In order to answer this question, we are looking into the time before Jesus begins His ministry, especially His incarnation - commonly referring to Christ as ‘God-man,’ that is coming as ‘God in the Flesh.’ At the time in history when Jesus arrives, the Mosaic Law had served its purpose of revealing the utter sinfulness and helplessness of mankind in making themselves right, before God, solely by their own human effort. (1) This is where the miraculous conception of Christ comes into the picture, since His mother, Mary conceived Him not by human agency, but through the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:20; Luke 1:35). (2) Like the Gospel of John (John 1:1-18), the birth narratives in Luke and Matthew are not comprehensive accounts, but selective in presenting Jesus’ early life. (3) Keeping this in mind, we also see Old Testament prophecies fulfilled in and through Jesus Christ, thereby authenticating Him as the promised Messiah. (4)

The following is an exploration of Jesus Christ - before arriving on the scene and after His arrival. There are three parts in total. The first part deals

with introductions to Jesus as found in the Gospels (John 1:1-18; Luke 1:1-4). The second part deals with the birth announcement, birth, infancy and youth of Christ as recorded in the Gospel of Luke. The third part investigates those same aspects of Jesus' life (as in the second part) as far as they are recorded in the Gospel of Matthew. All this is done in a commentary form, scrutinizing selected passages and pointing out the theological significance for Christianity. (5)

Introduction to Jesus Christ

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through Him all things were made, and without Him nothing was made that has been made. In Him was life, and that life was the light of men. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. There came a man who was sent from God. His name was John. He came as a witness to testify about the Light, so that through him everyone might believe. He himself was not the Light, but he came to testify about the Light. The true Light who gives light to every man was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through Him, the world did not recognize Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But to all who did receive Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God— children born not of blood, nor of the desire or will of man, but born of God. The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. John testified concerning Him. He cried out, saying, "This is He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because He was before me.' " From His fullness we have all received grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God, but the one and

only Son, who is Himself God and is at the Father's side, has made Him known.
John 1:1–18 (BSB)

As far as introductions to Jesus Christ go, apart from His genealogies (in Matthew 1:1-17 and Luke 3:23-38), the Gospel of John (John 1:1-18) and the Gospel of Luke (Luke 1:1-4) provide insights into the uniqueness of Christ, which we are turning to now.

Commentary:

This segment traces the beginnings of Jesus Christ to eternity and talks about His incarnation, not mentioning His conception or birth. (6) The significance of this prologue can be found in the first verse, with "the Word" referring to Jesus, revealing His pre-existence with God before creation - while not being identical to God the Father - yet, fully sharing in the Father's divinity. (7) It is here and in the following verses that we learn about Jesus being the eternally divine logos (Word), being the creator and source for all life (v.1-5), becoming the manifestation of 'God in the Flesh' (God incarnate) (v.14, 18) - in this way, we see a link between the doctrine of the Trinity and the doctrine of the incarnation, in that (for the former doctrine) Jesus is truly divine, and in that (for the latter doctrine) this divine Jesus is simultaneously truly human. (8)

Along with the deity of Christ, combined with the Old Testament verse found in Genesis 1:1-2, we can identify the three persons of the Trinity - Father, Son and Holy Spirit; we should note that the term 'Trinity' itself is not used in Scripture, it is assumed and conferred in other parts of the Bible (e.g. Luke 1:35; 3:22; Matthew 28:19; Galatians 4:6; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; Hebrews 10:29). (9) We will learn more about the Holy Spirit as we continue our exploration about Jesus in parts two and three of this article.

Birth, Infancy and Childhood of Jesus Christ (Gospel of Luke)

Many have undertaken to compose an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by the initial eyewitnesses and servants of the word. Therefore, having carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most

excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.
Luke 1:1–4 (BSB)

Commentary:

In contrast to John, Luke is addressing a different audience, likely a Greek person or group of people, since he is using a highly sophisticated Greek language. (10) The preface addresses a specific person ('Theophilus') (v.4) who also is addressed in Luke's companion volume - the Book of Acts (Acts 1:1-3), which makes Luke's Gospel, the only one with a follow-up book. (11) Unlike the Gospel of John, which mentions Jesus in the prologue (John 1:17), Luke only refers to Jesus as 'the Word' (Luke 1:2), which assumes that Theophilus already knows about Christ, affirmed by Luke referring to previous accounts about Jesus (v.1).

What matters most here is that Luke is emphasizing the validity of eyewitnesses and apostolic testimony (v.2) pointing to real events and facts, providing reassurance to Theophilus (for reasons unknown) and thereby for us (today) as well. Thus, thematically the witness is important to Luke and finds its continuation in the book of Acts, especially in dealing with the resurrection. (13) In its own unique way, then, this dedication to Theophilus is an introduction to Jesus Christ, that encompasses everything about Him (birth, infancy, adolescence, adult life, death and resurrection) - the first three aspects we are turning to next, in order to understand the complexity surrounding our Lord.

In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah, and whose wife Elizabeth was a daughter of Aaron. Both of them were righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and decrees of the Lord. But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well along in years. One day while Zechariah's division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God, he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter the temple of the Lord and burn

incense. And at the hour of the incense offering, the whole congregation was praying outside. Just then an angel of the Lord appeared to Zechariah, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and gripped with fear. But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah, because your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to give him the name John. He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He shall never take wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother’s womb. Many of the sons of Israel he will turn back to the Lord their God. And he will go on before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” “How can I be sure of this?” Zechariah asked the angel. “I am an old man, and my wife is well along in years.” “I am Gabriel,” replied the angel. “I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. And now you will be silent and unable to speak until the day this comes to pass, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled at their proper time.” Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah and wondering why he took so long in the temple. When he came out and was unable to speak to them, they realized he had seen a vision in the temple. He kept making signs to them but remained speechless. And when the days of his service were complete, he returned home. After these days, his wife Elizabeth became pregnant and for five months remained in seclusion. She declared, “The Lord has done this for me. In these days He has shown me favor and taken away my disgrace among the people.”
Luke 1:5–25 (BSB)

Commentary:

As Luke begins his “orderly account” (Luke 1:3), that is an attempt towards a sequential (chronological) rendering of Jesus’ life, we are again reminded of the fact that Luke is not an eyewitness to the risen Christ, but rendering what he was able to investigate himself - the *only* gospel writer revealing *how* he went about researching and writing his account. (14)

The above passage deals with the angel Gabriel foretelling the birth of John the Baptist. Before Gabriel reveals himself, we learn more details about the historical framework (King Herod of Judea in v.5), specifies about John’s parents, Zachariah and Elizabeth showing their priestly ancestry (v.5) and

their righteousness before God (v.6) even though Elizabeth had been childless, due to her being barren. (15) What matters most here is that we learn about the work of the Holy Spirit, filling John even before he is born, fulfilling the role of the Old Testament prophet Elijah and announcing the Baptist's ministry calling Israel to repentance, as forerunner to the ministry of Jesus Christ. (16) The work of the Holy Spirit is what links John the Baptist to Jesus, the Messiah (born of a virgin through the activity of the Holy Spirit). (17)

In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin pledged in marriage to a man named Joseph, who was of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. The angel appeared to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. So the angel told her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to give Him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever. His kingdom will never end!" "How can this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the Holy One to be born will be called the Son of God. Look, even Elizabeth your relative has conceived a son in her old age, and she who was called barren is in her sixth month. For no word from God will ever fail." "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it happen to me according to your word." Then the angel left her.
Luke 1:26–38 (BSB)

Commentary:

In this passage we find out more about the conception and birth announcement of Jesus. Again, it is the angel Gabriel who informs the virgin Mary about the events that are about to unfold. The announcement of the virgin birth, points us directly to Jesus Christ, His Messiahship seen in His name, Jesus (meaning 'God saves') (v.31), His titles, "Son of the Most High" (v.32) and "Son of God" (v.35).

Jesus' conception through the Holy Spirit from a virgin is unmatched in the entire Bible, and is a supernatural event (in tandem with Christ's resurrection) forming the foundation of Christianity. (18) Christ's conception and birth referred to as 'incarnation,' means that God Himself through Jesus

Christ has come as ‘God in the Flesh,’ thereby revealing Himself in a personal way to mankind - that way God enabling *every believer* in Christ - to enter into a personal relationship with God, since Jesus (born without sin, because of His supernatural conception through the Holy Spirit) atones for the sins of all believers through His work on the cross (2 Corinthians 5:19-21) reconciling Christians to God. (19)

In those days Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judah, where she entered the home of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. In a loud voice she exclaimed, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why am I so honored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For as soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord’s word to her will be fulfilled.”
Luke 1:39–45 (BSB)

Commentary:

Here we have the record of Mary visiting Elizabeth, a relative (see v.36) in an unnamed Hill Country in Judah (v.39-40). It is in this encounter, we see the working of the Holy Spirit’s authority, as Elizabeth (filled with the Spirit) blesses Mary, as well as testifying to Jesus’ divinity, referring to Him as “Lord,” and revealing the baby in her womb (John the Baptist) leaping for joy. (20)

Then Mary said: “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior! For He has looked with favor on the humble state of His servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed. For the Mighty One has done great things for me. Holy is His name. His mercy extends to those who fear Him, from generation to generation. He has performed mighty deeds with His arm; He has scattered those who are proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down rulers from their thrones, but has exalted the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things, but has sent the

rich away empty. He has helped His servant Israel, remembering to be merciful, as He promised to our fathers, to Abraham and his descendants forever."
Luke 1:46–55 (BSB)

Commentary:

This passage takes place while Mary is still with Elizabeth and shows us how Mary breaks out into a song (sometimes related to as 'hymn') recalling the Old Testament song (prayer) of Hannah (1 Samuel 2:1-10), pointing to Christ as the Messiah. (21) This is the first of three hymns in Luke 1-2, called the *Magnificat* (from the Latin word for "magnifies") - the second hymn by Zechariah in Luke 1:68-79 called the *Benedictus* (derived from the Latin word for "blessed") and the third hymn by Simeon in Luke 2:29-32 called the *Nunc Dimittis* (derived from the Latin words for "now dismiss"). (22)

When the time came for Elizabeth to have her child, she gave birth to a son. Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy, and they rejoiced with her. On the eighth day, when they came to circumcise the child, they were going to name him after his father Zechariah. But his mother replied, "No! He shall be called John." They said to her, "There is no one among your relatives who bears this name." So they made signs to his father to find out what he wanted to name the child. Zechariah asked for a tablet and wrote, "His name is John." And they were all amazed. Immediately Zechariah's mouth was opened and his tongue was released, and he began to speak, praising God. All their neighbors were filled with awe, and people throughout the hill country of Judea were talking about these events. And all who heard this wondered in their hearts and asked, "What then will this child become?" For the Lord's hand was with him.
Luke 1:57–66 (BSB)

Commentary:

The birth of John the Baptist as recounted here is important because he is the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy as the one coming "in the spirit and power of Elijah" (see Luke 1:17), which is later confirmed by Jesus in Matthew 17:12-13. Luke closes with Zechariah's hymn (Luke 1:67-79) in which he praises God, which is a prophecy fulfilled in John the Baptist, as Christ's messenger (v.76-79) and Christ himself (v.77-79) with the call to repent, pointing to the salvation in and through the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ. (23)

Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that a census should be taken of the whole empire. This was the first census to take place while Quirinius was governor of Syria. And everyone went to his own town to register. So Joseph also went up from Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, since he was from the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to him in marriage and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her Child to be born. And she gave birth to her firstborn, a Son. She wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.
Luke 2:1–7 (BSB)

Commentary:

This segment deals with the event of the birth of Jesus Christ providing many details. The reference to the Roman Emperor, Caesar Augustus, the governor Quirinius and the census taken at the time, leading Joseph and Mary to travel from Nazareth to Bethlehem, shows how God is working in and through people to accomplish His divine plan, and fulfill Old Testament prophecy already predicting the location of our Savior's birthplace (Micah 5:2). (24) The events here are humbling and Christ's birth itself reminds us of this, as He is placed in a "manger" (a feeding trough for animals) (v.7).

And there were shepherds residing in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks by night. Just then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid! For behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people: Today in the city of David a Savior has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord! And this will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger." And suddenly there appeared with the angel a great multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom His favor rests!" When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph and the Baby, who was lying in the manger. After they had seen the Child, they spread the message they had received about Him. And all who heard it were amazed at

what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, which was just as the angel had told them.
Luke 2:8–20 (BSB)

Commentary:

The first witnesses to our Lord's birth, other than Joseph and Mary, as we see here are, shepherds nearby (v.8) and angels (v.9-14) proclaiming the arrival of the Messiah and giving the shepherds a sign (v.12) enabling them to meet Jesus Christ, which they do in expectation, humility and obedience (v.15-20). What is unusual is that shepherds at the time were not considered trustworthy and often despised, having a bad reputation (25) - and yet, God, who sees the heart of every person, reveals Himself to the shepherds, providing three divine titles of Jesus (Savior, Christ and God) (v.11), leaving no doubt that the Messiah has come. (26)

When the eight days until His circumcision had passed, He was named Jesus, the name the angel had given Him before He had been conceived. And when the time of purification according to the Law of Moses was complete, His parents brought Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord (as it is written in the Law of the Lord: "Every firstborn male shall be consecrated to the Lord"), and to offer the sacrifice specified in the Law of the Lord: "A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."
Luke 2:21–24 (BSB)

Commentary:

This section shows us the dedication of Jesus at the temple in Jerusalem. We see here the piety and dedication of Joseph and Mary, as they are faithful in keeping God's law, that is the Mosaic law - circumcision as prescribed in the Old Testament (Leviticus 12:3-4), making an offering to God

(Leviticus 12:8) this being “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons,” indicating that they were poor, not being able to purchase a lamb for a sacrificial offering. (27) Their faithfulness and godliness is also seen here in naming this child ‘Jesus’ as the angel of the Lord had commanded them (Luke 1:31).

Now there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. The Holy Spirit had revealed to him that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. Led by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. And when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for Him what was customary under the Law, Simeon took Him in his arms and blessed God, saying: “Sovereign Lord, as You have promised, You now dismiss Your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to Your people Israel.” The Child’s father and mother were amazed at what was spoken about Him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to His mother Mary: “Behold, this Child is appointed to cause the rise and fall of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed— and a sword will pierce your soul as well.”
Luke 2:25–35 (BSB)

Commentary:

While still at the temple, there is an encounter with Simeon, who, having been led by the Holy Spirit identifies the infant Jesus as God’s “salvation” (v.30) and as a “light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to Your people Israel,” (v.32) which reveals that the Good News (gospel) is for both Jews and Gentiles alike, meaning all believers in Christ.

There was also a prophetess named Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher, who was well along in years. She had been married for seven years, and then was a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple, but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. Coming forward at that moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the Child to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.
Luke 2:36–38 (BSB)

Commentary:

Along with the prayer of Simeon (*Nunc Dimittis*) (Luke 2:29-32) and his prophecy (Luke 2:34-35) we learn here about Anna, a prophetess, who also comes forward to testify about the Messiah and thereby emphasizing the surpassing greatness of Jesus' ministry in contrast to John the Baptist. (28) The family then returns to Nazareth (Luke 2:39-40) where we find out that Jesus "grows strong," is "filled with wisdom," and "the grace of God being upon Him" (v.40).

Every year His parents went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. And when He was twelve years old, they went up according to the custom of the Feast. When those days were over and they were returning home, the boy Jesus remained behind in Jerusalem, but His parents were unaware He had stayed. Assuming He was in their company, they traveled on for a day before they began to look for Him among their relatives and friends. When they could not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for Him. Finally, after three days they found Him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard Him were astounded at His understanding and His answers. When His parents saw Him, they were astonished. "Child, why have You done this to us?" His mother asked. "Your father and I have been anxiously searching for You." "Why were you looking for Me?" He asked. "Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house ?" But they did not understand the statement He was making to them. Then He went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But His mother treasured up all these things in her heart. And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.
Luke 2:41–52 (BSB)

Commentary:

In this last part of chapter 2 we have the only account of Jesus as adolescent. What matters most here is that we find out about Jesus knowing about his unique relationship with God, at age twelve, his encounter in the temple with the religious teachers at the time (v.46-47) pointing to Christ's own role as teacher. (29) Also, Jesus's special divine relationship with God

points at the covenantal relationship between God and His people, as He refers to having to “be in My Father’s house,” (v.49). (30) This is both comforting and reassuring for us as Christians, since we learn later about a similar promise of Jesus preparing a place for all believers:

> “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe in Me as well. In My Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and welcome you into My presence, so that you also may be where I am.”
>
> John 14:1–3 (BSB)

Birth, Infancy and Childhood of Jesus Christ (Gospel of Matthew)

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged in marriage to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit.
Matthew 1:18 (BSB)

Commentary:

While there are differences in the events surrounding the birth, infancy and childhood of Jesus in the Gospels of Luke and Matthew, there are also several points of agreement. Among the most important similarities, as seen in v.18, is the conception of Christ by the Holy Spirit. Note that Matthew begins his gospel with a genealogy of Jesus (Matthew 1:1-17).

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged in marriage to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and was unwilling to disgrace her publicly, he resolved to divorce her quietly. But after he had pondered these things, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to embrace Mary as your wife, for the One conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a Son, and you are to give Him the name Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "Behold, the virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call Him Immanuel" (which means, "God with us"). When Joseph woke up, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him, and embraced Mary as his wife. But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a Son. And he gave Him the name Jesus.
Matthew 1:18–25 (BSB)

Commentary:

The connection of the virgin birth, better described as the 'virgin conception' through the work of the Holy Spirit stands out here (linking both the gospels of Matthew and Luke). (31) What is more, is that in Matthew's account of Jesus' birth announcement, we are reminded of Christ's divinity, as an angel of the Lord reveals to Joseph in a dream that one of His names will be "Immanuel" (i.e. 'God with us') (v.23) a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy (Isaiah 7:14; Isaiah 8:8; Isaiah 8:10). (32)

As we recall John 1:1-4, 14, we are again aware that Jesus Christ is God incarnate ('God in the Flesh') that is - both simultaneously human and divine, yet pre-existent. (33) The fulfillment of prophecy is at the forefront here, but also the obedience of Mary's husband, Joseph, revealed in his surrender to God's divine plan, after God tells him about the virgin conception, thwarting his initial plan to divorce Mary. (34) As such, we learn that God reveals the coming birth both to Mary (Luke 1:34-35) and Joseph (Matthew 1:20-23) and that the child's name will be Jesus.

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, asking, “Where is the One who has been born King of the Jews? We saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him.” When King Herod heard this, he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had assembled all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he asked them where the Christ was to be born. “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written: ‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah, for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of My people Israel.’” Then Herod called the Magi secretly and learned from them the exact time the star had appeared. And sending them to Bethlehem, he said: “Go and search carefully for the Child, and when you find Him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship Him.” After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stood over the place where the Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with great delight. On coming to the house, they saw the Child with His mother Mary, and they fell down and worshiped Him. Then they opened their treasures and presented Him with gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they withdrew to their country by another route.
Matthew 2:1–12 (BSB)

Commentary:

While the birth of Jesus has already taken place in Matthew’s account (v.1) we learn here about the visit of the Magi who seek out king Herod to find out more about the Messiah and His location (v.2). While we do not know much about the Magi (‘wise men’) we do know they are divinely guided by a star and have come to worship Jesus, which is an indication of God’s plan that salvation is prepared for all believers in Christ (Jews and Gentile). (35) As the Magi arrive a period of time of around two years following Christ’s birth have passed. (36)

What stands out here is that Old Testament prophecies are fulfilled regarding the birthplace of Jesus (v.4-6) and His Messiahship as “King of the Jews” (v.2). (37) Prior to His resurrection, as Jesus is dying on the cross, the

supposed charge placed above His head reads, “This is Jesus, the King of the Jews,” (Matthew 27:37). Even though Herod is trying to outwit the Magi, he is no match to God’s sovereign care and guidance, and so the Magi locate Jesus and worship Him (v.9-11), but are also guided by God going back home on their own way - being warned in a dream - not to return to Herod (v.12).

When the Magi had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Get up!” he said. “Take the Child and His mother and flee to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the Child to kill Him.” So he got up, took the Child and His mother by night, and withdrew to Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod. This fulfilled what the Lord had spoken through the prophet: “Out of Egypt I called My Son.”
Matthew 2:13–15 (BSB)

Commentary:

This passage tells us about the flight of Jesus and His family to Egypt. Here we see God’s providential hand upon Jesus and His family, as God sends an angel to warn Joseph very specifically about impending danger (v.13).

As part of God’s providence, we see His divine care of protecting his Anointed One (Jesus Christ), all along working through obedient people, such as Joseph here, being warned by angels in a dream, guiding him with specific instructions to flee to Egypt (v.13-14) and returning after the threat has passed. (38)

When Herod saw that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was filled with rage. Sending orders, he put to death all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, according to the time he had learned from the Magi. Then what was spoken through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled: “A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more.”
Matthew 2:16–18 (BSB)

Commentary:

What follows here is the ‘killing of the innocents,’ revealing the nature of evil, as expressed in Herod feeling threatened in his position by the birth of Jesus, and thus ordering the murder of “all boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity,” (v.16) - age two years and under - as an outworking of Herod’s rage. (39) At the same time, there is Old Testament prophecy fulfilled (Jeremiah 31:15) - Herod’s murder, with an allusion to ‘Rachel,’ at the time of Israel’s Old Testament exile, personifying the Israelite mothers at the time. (40)

After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt. “Get up!” he said. “Take the Child and His mother and go to the land of Israel, for those seeking the Child’s life are now dead.” So Joseph got up, took the Child and His mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he learned that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was spoken through the prophets: “He will be called a Nazarene.”
Matthew 2:19–23 (BSB)

Commentary:

This segment concludes the first two chapters in Matthew’s gospel, as well as what the Bible tells us about Jesus’ infancy, complemented by Luke’s gospel (Luke 1-2). Again, an angel gives precise instructions for Joseph to follow, revealing God’s divine guidance (v.19) and specifics concerning the relocation of the family, due to ‘Archelaus’ ruling in Judea as Herod’s replacement (v.21-23).

There are multiple Old Testament prophecies fulfilled here, especially with relocating to “Nazareth,” since these prophecies refer to the Messiah as a ‘branch’ (Hebrew ‘netzer’ reminiscent of ‘Nazareth’) (Isaiah 11:1; Jeremiah 23:5; 33:15; Zechariah 3:8; 6:12), hence the Messiah, Jesus Christ fulfills this outgrowth. (41) While the prophecies here remain implicit, it is worth noting that “he will be called a Nazarene” (v.23) correlating the aforementioned

‘branch’ to Jesus Christ, who is then known as a Nazarene, since he lives in Nazareth. (42)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
John 1:1 (BSB)

Conclusion:

To sum up: What are we to make of all of this? In brief, as seen, the birth announcement, birth, infancy and youth reveal the uniqueness of Jesus Christ. For one, we realize the importance of the virgin birth, that is the incarnation of Christ, since coming as ‘God in the Flesh,’ is just as supernatural as his resurrection and ascension (following His crucifixion and death), thereby pointing uniquely to His divinity. (43) This is important, since only through Christ’s substitutionary death, atoning for the sins of all Christians, is salvation available only in and through Him (John 14:6; 15:5). (44)

Likewise, as discussed in the introduction to Jesus Christ, we see how the ‘Word’ (Jesus) entered the sphere of history, space and time, to uniquely disclose God’s grace and glory. (45)

Also, the work of the Holy Spirit is revealed even prior to Jesus’ birth, seen in the birth announcements of both Jesus and His forerunner, John the Baptist, as well as in the lives of Zechariah, Elizabeth (the Baptist’s parents), the life of Simeon, and especially in the miraculous conception of Christ - the Holy Spirit then arriving at Pentecost coming upon Jesus’ followers (Acts 2:1) and anyone who will ever believe in Jesus. (46)

At the same time, we are confronted here with real events and facts in history, which are neither myth, nor midrash (a form of Jewish commentary on Hebrew Scripture) (47) nor are they man-made embellished fabrications, as are found in apocryphal works, which are not part of the Bible. (48) (49)

Furthermore, as we have found in both Luke and Mark, there are numerous prophecies fulfilled in and around Jesus Christ (His incarnation, His birth and events linked to His life), just in Matthew 1-2, for instance, we find five Old Testament passages fulfilled at the time of our Lord’s infancy, some being more straightforward than others in their limited fulfillment, most prominently the Messiah’s birthplace in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:5-6). (50)

In addition, (unlike the Gospel of Mark which starts with Jesus having grown up) (51) we have one singular account of Jesus' youth ('The twelve-year old Jesus in the Jerusalem Temple' in Luke 2:41-52) which demonstrates His unique divinely given abilities seen in His discussions with the religious teachers at the time (52) and His uniquely divine relationship with God - the Father, (as we have Jesus' first recorded words in the Gospels:

> "Why were you looking for Me?" He asked. "Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house ?"
>
> Luke 2:49 (BSB)

Then, as we consider the supernatural realm, we see the appearance and work of angels, as messengers of God, and divinely guiding the people to follow God's providence, as He is protecting Jesus Christ, most notably in Herod's failed plot to kill baby Jesus. (53)

Finally, all of the events taken together, point divinely to the unique miraculous fulfillment of God's promise in and through Jesus Christ as Messiah (54), affirmed in Matthew 1:23 that Jesus is 'God with Us' ("Immanuel") later reaffirmed in Christ's own words:

> "…and teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, even to the end of the age."
>
> Matthew 28:20 (BSB)

We are reminded here that as believers, we are commanded to worship Jesus Christ and Him only, since we place our hope, faith and love in Him, unlike man-made religious belief systems that do not point to the cross. (55) The main reason for this is that one purpose of Christ's incarnation has not yet been fulfilled, and that is His Second Coming: Jesus is returning (Matthew 25:31-34; Philippians 3:20-21; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10. (56) Therefore, since we see the uniqueness and divinity of Christ in His birth and childhood, the question we must ask ourselves is - Are we ready for Christ's return?

Appendix A

Glossary - (57)

Angel - A created spiritual being, literally a “messenger” (a), p.12.

Anna - A God-fearing widow, who testifies about baby Jesus, while meeting Him and His family at the Jerusalem temple (Luke 2:36-38).

Apocryphal Gospels - Books and book fragments with fictitious sayings and stories about Jesus - including apparent stories about Jesus’ birth and childhood (so-called ‘infancy gospels’) not included in the NT canon (e.g. the so-called ‘Gospel of Thomas,’ ‘Gospel of Peter,’ ‘Gospel of Judas, etc.). (b), p.50-51.

Archelaus - Son of Herod the Great; ruled Judea until he was ousted by the Romans. (b), p.632.

Atonement - Christ's work on the cross (His life and death, followed by his resurrection) to earn our salvation for believers. (c), p.1236.

Bethlehem - Birthplace of Jesus Christ, fulfilling the prophecy of Micah 5:2. (b), p.632.

Caesar Augustus - Also known as 'Octavian,' (63 BC - AD 14) ruled the Roman Empire at the time of Jesus' birth (Luke 2:1). (b), p.632.

Christ - Title used for the description of Jesus as Messiah - literally, "the anointed one." (a), p.31.

Elizabeth - Mother of John the Baptist and testifying about Jesus Christ as Messiah before His birth, when Mary visits her. (Luke 1:39-45).

Extra Biblical Evidence - Some evidence of Jesus' life outside of the Bible exists, such as Tacitus who refers to Christ's death under Pilate in the time of Caesar Tiberius (who ruled from AD 14-37) (see Luke 3:1), and such as Seutonius who refers to Jewish quarrels in Rome about a 'Chrestus' (most likely Christ and Christians) who faced expulsion from Rome (see Acts 18:2). (d), p.322.

Faith - Relying upon or trusting in someone or something outside of ourselves - for Christians - salvation, which is a result based solely on God's grace, received through faith alone, in Christ alone. (Romans 5:2; Ephesians 2:8-9). (e), p.14.

Galilee - A region in Jesus' time north of Samaria and Judea, where Jesus grew up (Matthew 2:19-23) and had a major share of His ministry (with Capernaum as one of His most prominent locations of ministry).

Herod - Also known as 'Herod the Great,' ('Herod I') an Edomite ruler of Israel from 37-4 BC. (b), p.637.

Holy Spirit - One of the three Persons of the Trinity, along with the other two (God-the Father and God-the Son, Jesus Christ). (c), p.1244

Hypostatic Union - The preincarnate and incarnate Jesus Christ, the "God-man." (f), p.240.

Incarnation - God taking on the form of human flesh, through Jesus Christ as 'God-man' (a person of the Trinity) - a mystery (John 1:1, 14). (g), p.264.

Jerusalem - City in Judah with the Jerusalem Temple as the main place of worship at the time of Christ - the central and only place for sacrifices (Deuteronomy 12:5-14). (b), p.638.

Judea - Region west of the Dead Sea (Salt Sea) with Jerusalem, where Jesus is dedicated at the Temple (Luke 2:41-52), visits as a twelve-year old boy and completes His ministry in the final week of His life ('Passion Week'), arrested, tried and crucified, dies and is resurrected.

King David - Ruler of the early kingdom of Israel, and ancestor of Jesus Christ the Messiah - God making His covenant with David and descendants forever - 2 Samuel 7; 2 Chronicles 13:5) (also see Luke 1:32). (a), p.47.

Logos - In the gospel of John this is a title given to Jesus - a Greek term, explaining Christ as God's self-revelation. (b), p.639.

Lord - Someone of superior authority or status, like 'master,' translated from various Old Testament and New Testament Hebrew titles, mainly referring to Jesus. Greek translates the term from the Hebrew Yahweh (YHWH), which is the personal name of God. (e), p.18.

Magi - Most likely Arabian or Persian astrologers, who are let by a star to Jesus Christ. (b), p.640.

Mary - Wife of Joseph and mother of Jesus, who is miraculously conceived in her womb - without human agency, through the Holy Spirit.

Midrash - A rabbinic interpretation of the Old Testament Scriptures, often linked to fictional additions to the original text. (b), p.640.

Nazareth - A village in Galilee in which Jesus grows up. (b), p.641.

Providence - God's sovereign, wise and good guidance as He controls all things, supplies the needs of believers in accomplishment of His holy will. (e), p.18.

Quirinius - Syrian governor at the time just prior to Jesus' birth (Luke 2:2). An extrabiblical reference to a 'Quirinius' who governed roundabout ten year later is reconcilable, since he could have also been in this position earlier. (h), p.247.

Redeem - Through His work on the cross, Jesus redeems all believers from slavery to sin along with its consequences. (Colossians 1:13-14). (e), p.10.

Salvation - The deliverance of a believer by God's divine act from the curse and power of sin, thereby restoring a person back to individual fellowship with God - as God had intended originally. (a), p.175.

Shepherds - A group of people, often looked down upon as outcasts, having a bad reputation. After Mary and Joseph, the first witnesses to Jesus Christ as Messiah, they are glorifying God and witnessing that the Messiah has come (Luke 2:8-20).

Simeon - Devout and godly man, witnessing 'to and prophesying' about the Messiah, as he meets Mary and Joseph dedicating baby Jesus at the Jerusalem temple (Luke 2:25-35).

Son of God - A Messianic title for Jesus, pointing to a unique relationship with God the Father (Luke 1:35). (b), p.645.

Temple - A permanent house of worship of God, erected at Jerusalem. Destroyed by the Romans in A.D. 70, following a Jewish revolt.

The Fall of Mankind - The original sin, as a result of Adam and Eve's disobedience to God, leads to losing their favourable standing with God (Genesis 3). Jesus' work on the cross (atonement) reconciles believers back to God.

Trinity - The biblical teaching that God exists as three persons (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) - each Person is fully God; and there is one God. (c), p.1256.

Virgin Birth - More accurately referred to as virgin conception, when Mary conceived Jesus miraculously, through the supernatural intervention of the Holy Spirit. (b), p.648.

Zechariah - Father of John the Baptist, a witness to God's divine plan of using his son to prepare the way for Jesus Christ (Luke 1:5-25, 1:57-80).

(57) Glossary terms adapted from:

(a) Erickson, Millard J. *The Concise Dictionary of Christian Theology*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001.
(b) Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020.
(c) Grudem, Wayne A. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand
Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000.
(d) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995.
(e) Agan, Jimmy. *Luke: A 12-Week Study*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2015.
(f) Enns, Paul P. *The Moody Handbook of Theology: Revised and Expanded*. Chicago, IL:
Moody Publishers, 2014.
(g) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011.
(h) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012.

Notes

(1) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011., p.264.
(2) Packer, J. I. *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1993., p.127-128.

(3) Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020., p.271.
(4) Enns, Paul P. *The Moody Handbook of Theology: Revised and Expanded*. Chicago, IL:
Moody Publishers, 2014., p.242.
(5) See Appendix A for Glossary with the most important people, places and theological terms.
(6) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.85.
(7) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009., p.246.
(8) Packer, J. I. *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1993., p.120-123.
(9) Buzzard, Justin. *John: A 12-Week Study*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2014., p.12-17.
(10) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009., p.237.
(11) Agan, Jimmy. *Luke: A 12-Week Study*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2015., p.7.
(12) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.245.
(13) Bock, Darrell L. *A Theology of Luke and Acts: God's Promised Program, Realized for All*
Nations. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2012., p.67.
(14) Bock, Darrell L. *A Theology of Luke and Acts: God's Promised Program, Realized for All*
Nations. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2012., p.67.
(15) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.245.
(16) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.246.
(17) Stein, Robert H. *Luke*. The New American Commentary: Volume 24. Nashville, TN: B&H, 1992., p.78-79.
(18) Agan, Jimmy. *Luke: A 12-Week Study*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2015., p.16.
(19) Alexander, T. Desmond and Brian S. Rosner, eds. *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. Leicester: IVP Academic, 2000.,p.576-577.
(20) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.246.
(21) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009., p.240.
(22) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.246-248.
(23) Grudem, Wayne, ed. *ESV Study Bible*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008.,p.1946-1947.

(24) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011., p.264.
(25) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009., p.241.
(26) Agan, Jimmy. *Luke: A 12-Week Study*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2015., p.14.
(27) Grudem, Wayne, ed. *ESV Study Bible*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008.,p.1948-1949.
(28) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009., p.241-242.
(29) Stein, Robert H. *Luke*. The New American Commentary: Volume 24. Nashville, TN: B&H, 1992., p.124.
(30) Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007., p.274-275.
(31) Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008., p.171.
(32) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.323.
(33) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.323.
(34) Enns, Paul P. *The Moody Handbook of Theology: Revised and Expanded*. Chicago, IL:
Moody Publishers, 2014., p.236.
(35) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.323.
(36) Grudem, Wayne, ed. *ESV Study Bible*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008.,p.1822.
(37) Fee, Gordon D. and Douglas K. Stuart, *How to Read the Bible Book by Book: A Guided Tour*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014., p.271.
(38) Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020., p.274.
(39) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.323.
(40) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009., p.236.
(41) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.198.
(42) Duvall, J. Scott, and J. Daniel Hays, eds. *The Baker Illustrated Bible Background Commentary.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2020., p.801.
(43) Packer, J. I. *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1993., p.127-128.

(44) Enns, Paul P. *The Moody Handbook of Theology: Revised and Expanded*. Chicago, IL:
Moody Publishers, 2014., p.238.
(45) Carson, D. A. *The Gospel According to John. Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991., p.111.
(46) Stein, Robert H. *Luke*. The New American Commentary: Volume 24. Nashville, TN: B&H, 1992., p.79.
(47) Stein, Robert H. *Luke*. The New American Commentary: Volume 24. Nashville, TN: B&H, 1992., p.80.
(48) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011., p.265.
(49) See Glossary (Appendix A) for extra biblical evidence about Jesus Christ.
(50) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009., p.233-234.
(51) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009., p.232.
(52) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009., p.242.
(53) Hunter, Drew. *Matthew: A 12-Week Study*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2014., p.16.
(54) Grudem, Wayne, ed. *ESV Study Bible*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008.,p.1822.
(55) Packer, J. I. *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1993., p.120-123.
(56) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011., p.264.
(57) See Glossary (Appendix A).

Bibliography

Agan, Jimmy. *Luke: A 12-Week Study*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2015.

Alexander, T. Desmond and Brian S. Rosner, eds. *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. Leicester: IVP Academic, 2000.

Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007.

Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009.

Bock, Darrell L. *A Theology of Luke and Acts: God's Promised Program, Realized for All Nations*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2012.

Buzzard, Justin. *John: A 12-Week Study*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2014.

Carson, D. A. *The Gospel According to John. Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991.

Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011.

Duvall, J. Scott, and J. Daniel Hays, eds. *The Baker Illustrated Bible Background Commentary.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2020.

Enns, Paul P. *The Moody Handbook of Theology: Revised and Expanded*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014.

Erickson, Millard J. *The Concise Dictionary of Christian Theology*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001.

Fee, Gordon D. and Douglas K. Stuart, *How to Read the Bible Book by Book: A Guided Tour*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014.

Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995.

Grudem, Wayne, ed. *ESV Study Bible*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008.

Grudem, Wayne A. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand
Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000.

Hunter, Drew. *Matthew: A 12-Week Study*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2014.

Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.

Packer, J. I. *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1993.

Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008.

Stein, Robert H. *Luke*. The New American Commentary: Volume 24. Nashville, TN: B&H, 1992.

The Genealogy of Jesus Christ

This is the record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham: Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers. Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram…

Matthew 1:1–3 (BSB)
See Appendix A for complete genealogy - Bible verses (v.4-16).

Jesus Himself was about thirty years old when He began His ministry. He was regarded as the son of Joseph, the son of Heli, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Melchi, the son of Jannai, the son of Joseph…

Luke 3:23–24 (BSB)
See Appendix A for complete genealogy - Bible verses (v.23-38).

Introduction:

In the Bible there are different genealogies, primarily in the Old Testament, revealing a continuation of history and relationships within the society of the ancient world. (1) In the New Testament, following the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, there are no more biblical genealogies, apart from those about Jesus as the Messiah found in the Gospel of Matthew (1:1-17) and the Gospel of Luke (Luke 3:23-38). (2) The following is an exploration of Jesus' genealogies (Matthew and Luke) as they relate to Old Testament genealogies, as they relate to each other (similarities and differences), what they have to say, including - looking at the people mentioned and the

theological significance - especially, in how they point to Jesus Christ as Savior of the World.

In this part we are investigating how Jesus' genealogy relates to other genealogies in the Bible - what are the similarities and differences? In general, biblical genealogies do not only focus on biological descent, but serve as family register stressing specific occupations (Genesis 4:17-22), a table of nations (Genesis 10:1-32) with an emphasis on people groups, instead of individuals. (3) As the scope of Old Testament genealogies narrows, we find complete records of the ancestry of Jacob ('Israel') (Genesis 46:3-27; Exodus 6:14-27), a census patterned on genealogical relationships (Numbers 26:1-56), military organization (Numbers 1-3) and the family status of the Kings of Judah and Israel (books of Kings and Chronicles). (4)

Similar to the New Testament genealogies of Jesus, in the Old Testament, we find a descending genealogy - from parent to child (1 Chronicles 9:39-44) reminiscent of Matthew's genealogy of Jesus and an ascending genealogy - from child to parent (1 Chronicles 9:14-16) reminiscent of Luke's genealogy of Jesus. (5)

Likewise, the naming of a child is often related to specific circumstances (e.g. Isaac, Genesis 21:3, 6, Jacob and Esau in Genesis 25:24-26, Jabez in 1 Chronicles 4:9), at times expressing a blessing of the child's future (e.g. Jesus in Matthew 1:24). (6) In the book of Chronicles, we find the inclusion of foreigners and Hebrew women (1 Chronicles 4:17-19; 7:24) as indication to fulfill the Abrahamic covenant of blessing the nations (Genesis 12:1-3) (7) familiar to Matthew's genealogy in which he names five women (Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba and Mary). (8)

Lastly, with Luke's genealogy following a similar order to Old Testament biblical genealogies (Ezra 7:1-5) the uniqueness of Jesus' divine ancestry (being in Luke 1-2) is established. (9) One major difference between the Old Testament and New Testament, in terms of genealogies, is the notable absence of such lists, following Christ's genealogies in Matthew and Luke.

Matthew vs. Luke Contrasted:

Matthew's genealogy - following the Old Testament style of genealogies (see Genesis 5:1-32) - provides a selection of Jesus' ancestry, beginning with Abraham, while Luke provides a longer selection, beginning with Jesus, all the way back to Adam and finally to God. (10)

In this part we are looking at similarities and differences between Jesus' genealogies as they are recorded in Matthew and Luke. What are some of the challenges arising from contrasting the two?

In terms of similarities, we see that Jesus' genealogies present Him as rightful heir to King David's throne, as they trace Jesus to David (Matthew 1:1; Luke 3:31). (11) Also, there is agreement between Luke and Matthew with Old Testament genealogies, tracing the line from David to Abraham. (12) As such, there is historical accuracy here, which points to the integrity of the Bible, as well as to God's sovereignty and mercy - with history moving toward the coming Christ. (13)

When it comes to differences, as said, Matthew uses a descending genealogy (from parent to child), while Luke uses an ascending genealogy (from child to parent). Matthew goes back to Abraham, Luke goes back to Adam. More challenging are the differences of specific names. With Matthew naming David twice (Matthew 1:17), revealing Solomon as David's son (Matthew 1:6) and naming Jacob as the father of Joseph (Matthew 1:16), this differs from Luke's genealogy in that here Nathan is revealed as David's son (Luke 3:31) and Eli ('Heli') is named as Joseph's father (Luke 3:23).

Different solutions have been proposed, and it is possible that Joseph may have been Eli's son-in-law, as found in Matthew's account. (14) The solution proposed that Matthew traces Jesus as David's descendent through Joseph, and Luke traces Jesus as David's descendent through Mary is less prominent today. (15) What complicates things is that the precise ancestral arrangement in Luke, when contrasted with Matthew is not certain - which makes an arrangement between both lists challenging, especially when it comes to Jesus' alleged grandfather. (16)

Among the most espoused and agreed upon suggestions is that Matthew's genealogy traces the *royal succession* line (from David to Solomon in Matthew 1:6), whereas Luke traces the actual *physical descent* of Joseph (from David to Nathan in Luke 3:31, with Nathan mentioned in 2 Samuel 5:14) with the convergence of both lives at Joseph. (17) This solution, if combined with the suggestion that either Luke or Matthew provides the legal descent, when the other provides the physical descent, is an attempt to harmonize the different names of Jesus' grandfathers, applying to levirate marriage laws (Deuteronomy 25:5). (18) However, other options are possible, especially relating to Joseph's grandfather ('Matthat' in Luke 3:24 and 'Matthan' in Matthew 1:15), depending on whether or not Matthat and Matthan are the same person. (19)

A Closer Look at Matthew's Genealogy:

In this part, we are looking at the people mentioned in Matthew's genealogy along with the theological significance. In the opening verse, Matthew reveals the purpose of his genealogy, which is to show that Jesus is

the Messiah, revealed in David's royal lineage and rightful heir of all messianic promises, bringing divine blessings to all people who will ever believe in Him - hence the emphasis on King David (Matthew 1:6) and including, primarily, Gentile women. (20)

Jesus is the most important individual in Matthew's genealogy, identified as the Jewish Messiah, Israel's Savior - His name 'Jesus' (in Greek) derived from Hebrew "Joshua," reminiscent of Moses' successor in the Old Testament. (21) Writing to a primarily Judeo-Christian audience, Matthew emphasizes Abraham as father of the Jewish nation and King David as a prototype of messianic king the Jewish people were expecting, culminating in revealing the identity of Jesus Christ. (22)

While there are many names not found in the Old Testament (i.e. "Abiud" to "Jacob"), Matthew includes the names of several women in His genealogy, that is Gentiles (Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and Bathsheba) and Mary, a non-Gentile woman. (3) What unifies them is that they were all under suspicion for alleged illicit sexual relations (see Genesis 38; Joshua 2; Ruth 3; 2 Samuel 11) and Mary, who was initially under a similar stigma (Matthew 1:18-25). Notably, there is a direct link to Ruth in the Old Testament, where we discover an attempt at a complete interim genealogy from Judah to King David (Ruth 4:17-22). (24) This fact further underscores the authenticity of Matthew's genealogy.

As we look at the structure of Matthew's genealogy, we see that there is a specific arrangement of persons:

> In all, then, there were fourteen generations from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Christ.
>
> Matthew 1:17 (BSB)

This is significant, since there are omissions of people ('gaps') which adds to the differences between Matthew's and Luke's genealogies. Considering Matthew 1:6-11 it is possible that Matthew may have used 1 Chronicles 3:10-14, since both omit specific people, in this case some of the kings mentioned in the Old Testament books (Kings and Chronicles). (25) God sovereignly works through Matthew, in leading Him to omit genealogical names, as we can see - the following table (comparing 1 Chronicles 3:10-12 to Matthew 1:8-9) (26):

Examples of Gaps In Genealogies	
1 Chronicles 3:10-12 and Matthew 1:8-9	
1 Chronicles 3:10-12	Matthew 1:8-9
Asa	Asa
Jehoshaphat	Jehoshaphat
Joram	Joram
Ahaziah (Uzziah)	Uzziah
Joash	----------
Amaziah	----------
Azariah	----------
Jotham	Jotham
Ahaz	Ahaz
Hezekiah (etc.)	Hezekiah (etc.)

This brings us back to the “fourteen generations” (Matthew 1:17) in which Matthew refers to “all the generations,” that is “all” referring to the people he included in his list, obviously omitting some - perhaps for symbolic symmetry or easier memorization. (27) It is possible, yet not conclusive, that Matthew uses a literary device and applies it to King David’s name (the three Hebrew letters of David’s name are: *dwd*) establishing the numerical value, equaling fourteen, to imply that Christ arrived in God’s perfect timing, thereby emphasizing divine intervention for the royal lineage of David. (28)

As for the theological significance of the people in Matthew’s genealogy, we see the fulfillment of God’s saving promises in Jesus Christ, which despite the omissions Matthew makes - could immediately speak to a Jewish person, at and around the time Matthew composed his Gospel, given the emphasis on Jesus as King David’s son and rightful heir to Messiahship. (29)

Also, Matthew connects both the Davidic and the Abrahamic covenant, as seen in Matthew 1:1. (30) The inclusion of women in the genealogy points to the Gentile mission, that the Gospel is for *both* Jew and Gentile alike (31) - a prominent theme, since God calls all people, especially outsiders (sinners, foreigners, outcasts) - that is effectively anyone who will respond to God’s salvation through Christ. (32)

Considering the people and theological significance in Luke’s genealogy, we recognize that not only is the listing sequence reversed, but also that Luke records Christ’s ancestry beyond Abraham, right back to the first person God created, that is Adam, who is referred to as “son of God” (Luke 3:38). (33) The inclusion of Adam is significant in that, he is the father

of the entire human race, pointing back to God himself as Creator of all mankind, adding a universal flavour to Luke's genealogy.

While many of the people named in Luke's genealogy are found in the Old Testament (Genesis 5:1-32; 11:10-26 and 1 Chronicles 1-3), thirty-six names are not. (34) Following the people that can be identified in the Old Testament, we have Zerubbabel (Luke 3:27) administrator of Jerusalem after the exile in 538 BC, we have Nathan (Luke 3:31) who is king David's third son, we have King David himself (Luke 3:31) alluding to Psalm 2:7 along with ancestral parallels in 1 Chronicles 1:34-2:15, we have Jesse (Luke 3:32) the father of David providing a prophetic list to the future Messiah, "from the stump of Jesse" (Isaiah 11:1) and we have Isaac, Jacob and Abraham (Luke 3:34) who, taken together, point to God's covenant with Abraham. (35)

The theological significance of Luke's genealogy can be found when we go right back to Adam, referred to as "the son of God" (Luke 3:38). He rebelled against God, showing himself to be faithless, resulting in the fall of mankind. This points back to Christ, who succeeded were Adam had failed - thereby becoming the greater Son of God, the "second Adam" and "last Adam" (1 Corinthians 15:45-49). (36) Thus, as God-Man, Jesus Christ, and His work on the cross has a universal aspect to it, since Luke emphasizes the human side of our Lord in his Gospel. (37)

The difference between Adam and Jesus is that the latter is conceived through the Holy Spirit, born sinless, thereby the only one who is able to atone for sins, providing salvation for believers. (38) The emphasis here is on Jesus' divine sonship and the universal nature of His ministry (i.e. "Son of Man") (39) that is Christ is our representative before God (40), which is the fulfillment of God's promise in the Protoevangelium (Genesis 3:15) linking Christ with the seed of the woman (that is Eve). (41)

Conclusion:

In summary, we see that the genealogies of Jesus Christ when compared with one another have both similarities and differences, we realize that not only are they reconcilable, but also reveal God's sovereign plan as He works through people in His providential rule to accomplish His ultimate goal. (42) In comparing the genealogies of Jesus in Matthew and Luke, we see that in the latter Gospel, Luke places the genealogy following Jesus' baptism and God's confirmation of Christ as His Son, revealing Jesus' identity and messianic status. (43)

While harmonizing the two gospels may be challenging - the best option being that Matthew reveals Jesus' legal status to David's throne through Joseph, whereas Luke provides Jesus' physical descent through Mary

- the agreement of Matthew and Luke far outweighs any differences, and shows the Holy Spirit at work in each of the gospel accounts. (44)

The inclusion of women in Matthew's genealogy stands out, revealing that God works through both Jews and Gentiles alike, regardless of background or reputation. (45) Jesus being born of a virgin is a fulfillment of prophecy and emphasizes Christ's divinity, as conceived by the Holy Spirit. (46) The prophetic nature inherent in the genealogies, for example the prophecy of Isaiah 11:1 reveals the Messiah as physical descendant of Jesse, King David's father (Luke3:32) pointing to the unique nature of Jesus Christ. (47)

Lastly, we see that Jesus' ancestry is directly linked to God's covenants with Israel, that is the Abrahamic covenant ("son of Abraham") and the Davidic covenant ("son of David"), as revealed in the opening verse of Matthew. (48) Taken together, both genealogies provide irrefutable evidence that Jesus is the Messiah, the Savior of every person who will ever believe in Him and turn to Him with a heart of repentance. (49)

APPENDIX A

Matthew 1:1–17 (BSB)

1 This is the record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham: 2 Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers. 3 Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram. 4 Ram was the father of Amminadab, Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon. 5 Salmon was the father of Boaz by Rahab, Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, Obed the father of Jesse, 6 and Jesse the father of David the king. Next: David was the father of Solomon

by Uriah’s wife, 7 Solomon the father of Rehoboam, Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asa. 8 Asa was the father of Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah. 9 Uzziah was the father of Jotham, Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah. 10 Hezekiah was the father of Manasseh, Manasseh the father of Amon, Amon the father of Josiah, 11 and Josiah the father of Jeconiah and his brothers at the time of the exile to Babylon. 12 After the exile to Babylon: Jeconiah was the father of Shealtiel, Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, 13 Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor. 14 Azor was the father of Zadok, Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud. 15 Eliud was the father of Eleazar, Eleazar the father of Matthan, Matthan the father of Jacob, 16 and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ. 17 In all, then, there were fourteen generations from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Christ.

Luke 3:23–38 (BSB)

23 Jesus Himself was about thirty years old when He began His ministry. He was regarded as the son of Joseph, the son of Heli, 24 the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Melchi, the son of Jannai, the son of Joseph, 25 the son of Mattathias, the son of Amos, the son of Nahum, the son of Esli, the son of Naggai, 26 the son of Maath, the son of Mattathias, the son of Semein, the son of Josech, the son of Joda, 27 the son of Joanan, the son of Rhesa, the son of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, the son of Neri, 28 the son of Melchi, the son of Addi, the son of Cosam, the son of Elmadam, the son of Er, 29 the

son of Joshua, the son of Eliezer, the son of Jorim, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, 30 the son of Simeon, the son of Judah, the son of Joseph, the son of Jonam, the son of Eliakim, 31 the son of Melea, the son of Menna, the son of Mattatha, the son of Nathan, the son of David, 32 the son of Jesse, the son of Obed, the son of Boaz, the son of Sala, the son of Nahshon, 33 the son of Amminadab, the son of Admin, the son of Arni, the son of Hezron, the son of Perez, the son of Judah, 34 the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, the son of Terah, the son of Nahor, 35 the son of Serug, the son of Reu, the son of Peleg, the son of Eber, the son of Shelah, 36 the son of Cainan, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech, 37 the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalalel, the son of Cainan, 38 the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.

APPENDIX B

Other significant genealogies are found in:

Genesis 4:16-24; 5; 10; 11:10-32; 19:30-38; 22:20-24; 25:12-26; 36; 46:8-27

Exodus 6:14-25

Numbers 3; 26

Ruth 4:18-22

2 Samuel 3:2-5; 5:13-16

Ezra 7:1-5

Esther 2:5-6

Matthew 1:1-17

Luke 3:23-38

Notes

(1) Bartholomew, Craig G., Daniel J. Treier, Kevin Jon Vanhoozer, and Nicholas Thomas Wright. *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005., p.242.
(2) Bartholomew, Craig G., Daniel J. Treier, Kevin Jon Vanhoozer, and Nicholas Thomas Wright. *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005., p.245.
(3) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011., p.513.
(4) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011., p.513-514.
(5) Bartholomew, Craig G., Daniel J. Treier, Kevin Jon Vanhoozer, and Nicholas Thomas Wright. *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005., p.242.
(6) Bartholomew, Craig G., Daniel J. Treier, Kevin Jon Vanhoozer, and Nicholas Thomas Wright. *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005., p.245.
(7) Bartholomew, Craig G., Daniel J. Treier, Kevin Jon Vanhoozer, and Nicholas Thomas Wright. *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005., p.245.
(8) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011., p.514.
(9) Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007., p.281.
(10) Carson, D. A. ed. *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015., 1949, 2021., p.1926.
(11) Enns, Paul P. *The Moody Handbook of Theology: Revised and Expanded*. Chicago, IL:
Moody Publishers, 2014., p.235.
(12) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011., p.514.
(13) Bartholomew, Craig G., Daniel J. Treier, Kevin Jon Vanhoozer, and Nicholas Thomas Wright. *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005., p.243.
(14) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011., p.514-515.
(15) Bartholomew, Craig G., Daniel J. Treier, Kevin Jon Vanhoozer, and Nicholas Thomas Wright. *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005., p.244.
(16) Stein, Robert H. *Luke*. The New American Commentary: Volume 24. Nashville, TN: B&H, 1992., p.140-141.
(17) Grudem, Wayne, ed. *ESV Study Bible*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008., 2023., p.1954.
(18) *Nelson's Complete Book Of Bible Maps And Charts*, 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010., p.328.

(19) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.90.
(20) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.88.
(21) Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007., p.2-3.
(22) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.196.
(23) Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007., p.2-3.
(24) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011., p.513.
(25) Grudem, Wayne, ed. *ESV Study Bible*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008., 2023., p.1821.
(26) Grudem, Wayne A. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand
Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000., p.290.
(27) Grudem, Wayne, ed. *ESV Study Bible*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008., 2023., p.1820-1821.
(28) Duvall, J. Scott, and J. Daniel Hays, eds. *The Baker Illustrated Bible Background Commentary.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2020.,p.797.
(29) Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008., p.170-171.
(30) Bartholomew, Craig G., Daniel J. Treier, Kevin Jon Vanhoozer, and Nicholas Thomas Wright. *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005., p.244.
(31) Fee, Gordon D. and Douglas K. Stuart, *How to Read the Bible Book by Book: A Guided Tour*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014., p.271.
(32) Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020., p.273.
(33) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009., p.242.
(34) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.238.
(35) Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007., p.282-283.
(36) Agan, Jimmy. *Luke: A 12-Week Study*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2015., p.21.
(37) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009., p.242.
(38) Stein, Robert H. *Luke*. The New American Commentary: Volume 24. Nashville, TN: B&H, 1992., p.142.

(39) Bartholomew, Craig G., Daniel J. Treier, Kevin Jon Vanhoozer, and Nicholas Thomas Wright. *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005., p.244.
(40) Bock, Darrell L. *A Theology of Luke and Acts: God's Promised Program, Realized for All Nations*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2012., p.161.
(41) Enns, Paul P. *The Moody Handbook of Theology: Revised and Expanded*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014., p.235.
(42) Bartholomew, Craig G., Daniel J. Treier, Kevin Jon Vanhoozer, and Nicholas Thomas Wright. *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005., p.245.
(43) Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007., p.281.
(44) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011., p.515.
(45) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009., p.233.
(46) Fee, Gordon D. and Douglas K. Stuart, *How to Read the Bible Book by Book: A Guided Tour*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014., p.272.
(47) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011., p.515.
(48) Grudem, Wayne, ed. *ESV Study Bible*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008., 2023., p.1821.
(49) Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020., p.323.

Bibliography

Agan, Jimmy. *Luke: A 12-Week Study*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2015.

Bartholomew, Craig G., Daniel J. Treier, Kevin Jon Vanhoozer, and Nicholas Thomas Wright. *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005.

Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007.

Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009.

Bock, Darrell L. *A Theology of Luke and Acts: God's Promised Program, Realized for All Nations*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2012.

Carson, D. A. ed. *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015.

Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011.

Duvall, J. Scott, and J. Daniel Hays, eds. *The Baker Illustrated Bible Background Commentary.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2020.

Enns, Paul P. *The Moody Handbook of Theology: Revised and Expanded*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014.

Fee, Gordon D. and Douglas K. Stuart, *How to Read the Bible Book by Book: A Guided Tour*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014.

Grudem, Wayne, ed. *ESV Study Bible*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008., 2023.

Grudem, Wayne A. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand

Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000.

Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012.

Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.

Nelson's Complete Book Of Bible Maps And Charts, 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010.

Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008.

Stein, Robert H. *Luke*. The New American Commentary: Volume 24. Nashville, TN: B&H, 1992.

Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020.

The Baptism of Jesus Christ

Introduction:

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. As soon as Jesus came up out of the water, He saw the heavens breaking open and the Spirit descending on Him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: “You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased.”
Mark 1:9–11 (BSB)

The baptism of Jesus Christ is among the most important events in the Gospels. It is mentioned in different ways in all four Gospels, providing unique details. This event is also linked to John the Baptist, a relative of Jesus.

In the New Testament, we find two kinds of baptism, namely, that performed by John the Baptist, and the baptism related to Jesus, His disciples and the Apostle Paul (John 3:22-26; Acts 2:38-41; 1 Corinthians 1:14-17) - both water rituals are derived from Jewish purification rites (Leviticus 14:6-16; 15:5-27; Numbers 19:7-22) and yet, as we are to find out, uniquely different. (1)

The following is an exploration of Jesus’ baptism and its meaning for Christians. There are two parts. In the first part, we are considering truths about John the Baptist (the beginning of his ministry, his message, his view of Jesus and his courage). In the second part, we are looking at the baptism of Christ, as it is revealed in all four gospels (Mark 1:9-11; Matthew 3:13-17; Luke 3:21-23 and John 1:29-34). Both parts are developed in the form of a commentary, pointing out significant verses, their meaning, their interrelationship and theology.

Truths About John the Baptist

John’s Ministry Begins:

In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.”
Matthew 3:1–2 (BSB)

In this part we are taking a closer look at Jesus’ predecessor, John the Baptist, whose ministry is recorded in all four Gospels. The beginning of his ministry (Matthew 3:1-2; Mark 1:1-4; Luke 3:1-2 and John 1:19-28) follows the angelic announcement to his Father, Zechariah (Luke 1:8-20) revealing God’s divine plan of redemption, as John the Baptist is the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy (Malachi 3:1; 4:5-6) coming in the spirit of the prophet Elijah (Luke 1:17) - John’s message is a call to repentance as Jesus Christ is about to begin His ministry: “prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for Him,” (Matthew 3:1-3; Mark 1:2-4; Luke 3:3-6). (2)

The beginning of John’s ministry is well-grounded in history as described in Luke:

> In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, while Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness.
>
> Luke 3:1–2 (BSB)

Commentary:

In this Bible passage we see the precise dating of the beginning for John's ministry (v.1). Along with this, we find real people and historical events mentioned here, including the Roman emperor Tiberius Caesar (reigning from AD 14 to 37), Pontius Pilate - governor of Judea (reigning from AD 26-36), three tetrarchs and two high priests, Annas and Caiaphas (v.2). What matters here is the unequaled precision of dates and people in the New Testament, which means that the promise of salvation is firmly grounded in world history. This promise upholds them as we learn here, that "…the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness" (v.2) and both John and later Jesus appear before Herod, as well as Jesus appearing before Caiaphas, Annas and Pilate. (3)

And this was John's testimony when the Jews of Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him, "Who are you?" He did not refuse to confess, but openly declared, "I am not the Christ." "Then who are you?" they inquired. "Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" He answered, "No." So they said to him, "Who are you? We need an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet: "I am a voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way for the Lord.' " Then the Pharisees who had been sent asked him, "Why then do you baptize, if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" "I baptize with water," John replied, "but among you stands One you do not know. He is the One who comes after me, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie." All this happened at Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.
John 1:19–28 (BSB)

Commentary:

Complimenting Luke's detailed account of John the Baptist beginning his ministry (Luke 3:1-2) is the testimony we have in the above passage recorded in the Gospel of John. In the Baptist's testimony - who is responding to Jewish leaders from Jerusalem ("priests and Levites") (v.19) - we learn more about his relation to Jesus Christ, the expected Messiah and other expected people. (4) As John answers the Jewish leaders - note, that not all of those leaders opposed Jesus later on, such as Nicodemus (John 3:1-15; 7:50) and Joseph of Arimathea (John 19:38-42 - we understand that he is a

forerunner to our Lord (v.23). (5) The fact that the Baptist's ministry was making an impact, can be seen in the appearance of Levites here (v.19) who are hardly ever mentioned in the New Testament, and are generally associated with temple rituals, but also were teachers (2 Chronicles 35:3; Nehemiah 8:7-8). (6)

The testimony of John the Baptist is then directly linked to Jesus Christ, without mentioning His name (v.26-27). The messengers neither know who John the Baptist is, nor why he is baptizing in the wilderness (v.19), and they certainly do not know Jesus who is standing right there with them (v.26). And yet, John points them back to God's Word indirectly, by identifying himself with the words of the Prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 40:1-5). (7) Again, like Luke, we have a specific location provided here ('Bethany' in v.28) grounding this encounter in factual history, as God's messenger prepares the way for the Messiah.

John the Baptist - The Man and His Message

…and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near." This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: "A voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for Him.' " John wore a garment of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region around the Jordan. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. But when John saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his place of baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit, then, in keeping with repentance. And do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. The axe lies ready at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. I baptize you with water for repentance, but after me will come One more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing fork is in His hand to clear His threshing floor and to

gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”
Matthew 3:2–12 (BSB)

Commentary:

In this passage we find out more about John the Baptist and his message (also recorded in Mark 1:2-8; Luke 3:3-14; John 1:20-23). Right in the second verse, we see his message expressed: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near,” in which he is preaching a message of repentance and judgment. (8) This becomes more clear when John speaks out against some of the Pharisees and Sadducees at his place of baptism (v.7-10). John speaks to them about Jesus, who he does not mention by name, but refers to eternal judgment of unrepentant people, the burning up of chaff “with unquenchable fire,” which clearly distinguishes the ministries of John and Jesus. (9)

He went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet: “A voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for Him. Every valley shall be filled in, and every mountain and hill made low. The crooked ways shall be made straight, and the rough ways smooth. And all humanity will see God’s salvation.’ ” Then John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit, then, in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. The axe lies ready at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.” The crowds asked him, “What then should we do?” John replied, “Whoever has two tunics should share with him who has none, and whoever has food should do the same.” Even tax collectors came to

be baptized. “Teacher,” they asked, “what should we do?” “Collect no more than you are authorized,” he answered. Then some soldiers asked him, “And what should we do?” “Do not take money by force or false accusation,” he said. “Be content with your wages.”
Luke 3:3–14 (BSB)

Commentary:

Here, we have additional details about the Baptist’s message (also in Mark 1:2-8) and realize that his preaching and call to repentance is linked to the “forgiveness of sins” (v.3) as a result of God responding to truly repentant hearts. (10) John’s message here includes practical ethical admonitions to different groups of people (crowds in v.10, tax collectors in v.12, and soldiers in v.14) (11).

He did not refuse to confess, but openly declared, “I am not the Christ.” “Then who are you?” they inquired. “Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the Prophet?” He answered, “No.” So they said to him, “Who are you? We need an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?” John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet: “I am a voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way for the Lord.’ ”
John 1:20–23 (BSB)

Commentary:

This passage concludes what we learn about John the Baptist - his person and message. The explicit Old Testament quotation here (v.22) highlights his status and simultaneously points to Jesus Christ as the Messiah. (12) These foregoing three denials in response to the questions of the priests and Levites (v.19-21) show his truthfulness and witness to the gospel. His first denial, not being the Christ, confirms that he is not the Christ, the expected Messiah - His second denial, not being Elijah is appropriate in that he denies that he literally is the returning prophet Elijah, and yet an element of mystery remains here, since Jesus later states that John “was Elijah” (Matthew 11:14; 17:12; Mark 9:13). (13) The third denial, relating to the so-called ‘Prophet,’ as predicted by Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15, 18 and see also Acts 3:22; 7:37) reveals John’s personality to us in that there is an uprightness here (something like ‘No means No’). (14)

What matters most here, is that we have a well-rounded picture of John the Baptist, that is as man and his message. His activity in the ‘wilderness,’ that is, uninhabited and uncultivated territory points back to Israel’s history, as recorded in the Old Testament (God’s deliverance of Israel out of Egypt and God’s covenant at Mt. Sinai) - coupled with his baptism as an appeal for Israel to repent, we witness a different baptism than the one Jesus stands for. (15) The factuality of John the Baptist, coming and preaching as a real person is attested to in extrabiblical writings by Josephus (Ant. 18.5.2/11-17) where a brief description of John’s ministry is provided. (16)

John the Baptist’s Picture of Jesus

Now John was also baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because the water was plentiful there, and people kept coming to be baptized. (For John had not yet been thrown into prison.) Then a dispute arose between John’s disciples and a certain Jew over the issue of ceremonial washing. So John’s disciples came to him and said, “Look, Rabbi, the One who was with you beyond the Jordan, the One you testified about—He is baptizing, and everyone is going to Him.” John replied, “A man can receive only what is given him from heaven. You yourselves can testify that I said, ‘I am not the Christ, but am sent ahead of Him.’ The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom stands and listens for him, and is overjoyed to hear the bridegroom’s voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete. He must increase; I must decrease.
John 3:23–30 (BSB)

Commentary:

As the coming of God’s Kingdom through Jesus Christ begins, John the Baptist’s preaching comes to a close, since he belongs to a past era. (17) Here we are looking at John the Baptist and his view of Jesus, which is also recorded from different perspectives in Matthew 3:11-12; Mark 1:7-8; Luke 3:15-18 and John 1:24-27.

In this text we find a more pronounced testimony of John the Baptist about Jesus, since he is dealing with a dispute apparently over “ceremonial washing” (v.25) leading John’s disciples to questions, since Jesus’ disciples (but not Jesus Himself seen in John 4:2) are baptizing people (v.26). It is in John’s response to his own disciples that we see his view of Jesus and his own relationship to Jesus well expressed (v.27-30).

The proverb John the Baptist uses (v.27) shows that he acknowledges God's sovereign role in assigning particular missional tasks as part of His redemptive plan. (18) The parable in v.29 illustrates John the Baptist's understanding of his God-given role (as "friend of the bridegroom") and Jesus' superior role (as "bridegroom"), since only Jesus (Revelation 21:9) is king of Israel and Messiah (Isaiah 62:4-5; Jeremiah 2:2; Hosea 2:16-20) - all of this culminates in John's testimony acknowledging the supremacy of Jesus Christ (v.30). (19)

The Courage of John the Baptist

But when he rebuked Herod the tetrarch regarding his brother's wife Herodias and all the evils he had done, Herod added this to them all: He locked John up in prison.
Luke 3:19–20 (BSB)

Commentary:

As the ministry of John the Baptist comes to a close, we must acknowledge his courage. This can be seen in the above passage, when John rebukes 'Herod the tetrarch' (Herod Antipas) for his unlawful marriage "and all the evils he had done," (v.19) resulting in the imprisonment of John (v.20).

This event is more fully recorded in Matthew 14:4-12 and details the gruesome execution of John the Baptist by Herod Antipas. However, before John is murdered, Jesus reassures him that Christ is the Messiah, and he should remain firm in his belief in Jesus (Luke 11:1-6). Notably, the imprisonment of John the Baptist at a fortress built by Herod (confirmed through archeological excavation) is recorded in the extrabiblical writings of Josephus (Jewish Antiquities 18.116-119) which authenticates both the life and ministry of John the Baptist. (20)

The Baptism of Jesus Christ

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. As soon as Jesus came up out of the water, He saw the heavens breaking open and the Spirit descending on Him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: “You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased.”
Mark 1:9–11 (BSB)

Having investigated the truths about Jesus’ predecessor, John the Baptist, we now turn to the event (prior to the Baptist’s execution) of the baptism of Jesus Christ, which is recorded in all four Gospels (Mark 1:9-11; Matthew 3:13-17; Luke 3:21-23 and John 1:29-34).

Commentary:

In the above passage (Mark 1:9-11) we have a compact summary of Jesus’ baptism. Here we find three specific events, which signify God’s inauguration of His kingdom in eschatological Jewish tradition: the opening of heaven (v.10), the Holy Spirit descending on Jesus (v.10) and a voice from heaven speaking to Jesus (v.11). (21) The “heavens breaking open” (v.10) points to a cosmic event linked to the death of Jesus and later on the temple curtain torn (Mark 15:37-38) prior to His resurrection. (22) The divine nature of Jesus’ baptism is emphasized by the Spirit’s descending, combined with the assurance by God’s own voice that Jesus truly is God’s Son. (23) After centuries of God ‘being silent,’ the voice from heaven reaffirms that divine revelation has now resumed. (24)

At that time Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to prevent Him, saying, “I need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?” *“Let it be so now,”* Jesus replied. *“It is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness in this way.”* Then John permitted Him. As soon as Jesus was baptized, He went up out of the water. Suddenly the heavens were opened, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and resting on Him. And a voice from heaven said, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased!”
Matthew 3:13–17 (BSB)

Commentary:

The baptism of Jesus, as recorded in Matthew 3:13-17, raises some interesting questions. Right at the start we realize that John the Baptist tries to prevent Jesus from being baptized (v.14). Why did Jesus insist on being baptized (v.15)? Part of this answer is, that even though Jesus was sinless (conceived by the Holy Spirit and born without sin), He identifies with fallen sinful mankind (see 2 Corinthians 5:21) and also identifies with John's ministry, as a response to John calling for repentance. (25)

The other part to this answer is that Jesus, because of His identification with the Israelite people, had to submit to God's requirements to fulfill the law, as part of His role as Messiah, to those "known under law" (Galatians 4:4) - in other words, His baptism is a proclamation that Jesus takes the place of all repentant sinners, to remove them from God's penal judgment ("to fulfill all righteousness in this way" in v.15). (26)

When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as He was praying, heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on Him in a bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased." Jesus Himself was about thirty years old when He began His ministry. He was regarded as the son of Joseph, the son of Heli… Luke 3:21–23 (BSB)

Commentary:

Turning to the record of Christ's baptism in the Gospel of Luke, we have unique details not found in the other Gospels. As such, we find out that Jesus is "praying," (v.21) which indicates a divine relationship between Jesus Christ and God-the Father - hereby, as Christians, Jesus becomes our model to follow as we surrender to God for direction and guidance in our prayer lives. (27)

We learn about Jesus' age ("about thirty years old" in v.23), as he begins His ministry following the baptism, adding a historical fact, (28) which is then combined with His genealogy (Luke 3:23-38). The affirmation of Christ by God's voice (v.22) reveals Jesus' divine title, as "Son," which occurs again at Christ's transfiguration (Matthew 9:1-13, Luke 9:28-36) indicating Jesus' unique relationship to God. (29)

Lastly, as in the other Gospel accounts, we find here the theological revelation of the Trinity (God-the Father, manifested in the voice; God-the Son, that is Jesus Christ; and God-the Holy Spirit, manifested in a form like a dove). What matters here is that at Christ's baptism the manifestation of the

Trinity, emphasizes the uniqueness of this divine event. Jesus Christ is identified as Spirit-bearer, who in turn, becomes the Spirit-baptizer (John 1:32-33) replacing John the Baptist's ministry with His own. (30)

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is He of whom I said, 'A man who comes after me has surpassed me because He was before me.' I myself did not know Him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that He might be revealed to Israel." Then John testified, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove and resting on Him. I myself did not know Him, but the One who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit descend and rest is He who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God."
John 1:29–34 (BSB)

Commentary:

Having been baptized, Jesus is mentioned again here in the Gospel of John, providing additional details about the meaning and purpose of Christ's baptism - here - as John the Baptist (prior to his imprisonment and execution) gives an important testimony.

John the Baptist explains the reason for his own mission of baptizing (v.31), followed by his testimony that God Himself had prepared a pre-arranged sign for John that would help him identify Jesus Christ as Messiah (v.32-33). This provides the basis for the Baptist's testimony, and helps us as Christians embrace this testimony for ourselves, that Jesus is indeed the "son of God," (v.34), thereby, revealing the unique work of the Holy Spirit, as we can see in the Old Testament, in the first verses of Genesis (Genesis 1:1-2) where the "Spirit of God" is mentioned. (31)

Also, when John testifies about Jesus as "the Lamb of God" (v.29) we understand that Jesus himself becomes the atoning 'lamb' for the sins of all believers in Christ. (32) With both Jesus and John the Baptist fulfilling God's divine plan of redemption, John testifying about Jesus' surpassing greatness, "because He was before me," (v.30) points to Christ's incarnation, since Jesus was born *after* John the Baptist.

Finally, this passage points to the ongoing use of baptism in the Christian community (without the Bible specifying the exact details). *Repentance* is key here, as we consider Jesus' encounter with Nicodemus, where Christ says:

> Jesus answered, ***"Truly, truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh is born of flesh, but spirit is born of the Spirit. Do not be amazed that I said, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes. You hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."***
>
> John 3:5–8 (BSB)

This is where John the Baptist's baptism (a call to repentance) and Jesus' baptism interlock, since Christ's baptism is the ('unspecified') pattern for Christian baptism. (34) Thus, the trinitarian formula in later church history, is derived from the baptismal formula Jesus provides, after His resurrection, at the 'Great Commission' (Matthew 28:19). (35)

Conclusion:

Then Jesus came to them and said, *"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, even to the end of the age."*
Matthew 28:18–20 (BSB)

In sum, we have seen that the baptism of Jesus Christ as revealed to us in Mark 1:9-11; Matthew 3:13-17; Luke 3:21-23 and John 1:24-34, is a unique factual event in history, in which Jesus identifies with those people He came to save - His Heavenly Father blesses Him and verifies through the Holy Spirit that Jesus is the Messiah. (36)

First, we see in the life and person of John the Baptist and in his evangelism (as he refers to Isaiah 40:3) a call to repent along with the promise of restoration and forgiveness. (37) Furthermore, we realize John's

specific position in God's plan of redemption, since he is the last of Old Testament prophets, and occupies a unique place as God's messenger, since he comes in the spirit of Elijah (Malachi 3:1; 4:5; Luke 1:17; Matthew 11:9-10, 14). (38) Also, the Baptist is not only a godly man full of courage (suffering for God's kingdom to the point of execution), but also is an important eyewitness at *and* after Jesus' baptism (John 1:29-34), affirming Jesus Christ as Messiah.

Second, we recognize that - as the ministry of John the Baptist comes to a close - Jesus' baptism reveals His identity and mission. At this event, God's voice from heaven affirms Jesus' divine sonship, and the Holy Spirit descending upon Him confirms Jesus as the Christ ('Anointed One'). (39) The manifestation of the Trinity here (God-the Father, God-the Son, that is Jesus Christ and God-the Holy Spirit) - later reiterated by Jesus after His resurrection, at the 'Great Commission' in Matthew 28:18-20 - points to Christ's commissioning in the years to follow as, itinerant healer, preacher and teacher. (40)

Third, the endorsement and confirmation of Jesus as Messiah ('the Coming One') at His baptism (41) is effectively a call to repentance. As Jesus' ministry begins along with His main objective of preaching the good news, repentance means to believe in Jesus as essential aspect of following Him (Mark 1:17). (42) Baptism, *without* a repentant heart, does not accomplish salvation:

> And this water symbolizes the baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body, but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,
>
> 1 Peter 3:21 (BSB)

The mode of baptism (sprinkling, immersion, etc.) is *not* decisive either, since Jesus never explains *what the ritual itself means* (the Apostle Paul provides a more fuller explanation in Romans 6:1-14 and 2 Corinthians 5:17). (43)

What matters most is that - with the arrival of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (44) - anybody is welcome to come to Jesus with a truly repentant heart, so Christian baptism is a sign of initiation directed at a relationship with Christ. (45) This background helps us understand God's call to repent and how it relates to baptism, as we do well to heed the Apostle Peter's words in the Bible:

> Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will

> receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. This promise belongs to you and your children and to all who are far off—to all whom the Lord our God will call to Himself.”
>
> Acts 2:38–39 (BSB)

Salvation is available only through faith in Jesus Christ as personal savior. Amen.

Key Terms

Annas

Baptism

Caiaphas

Exodus

Herod Antipas (Luke 3:1-2)

High Priesthood

Holy Spirit

Lamb of God

Messiah

Pharisees

Pilate

Repentance

Salvation

Tetrarchs

Tiberius Caesar

Trinity

Notes

(1) Duvall, J. Scott, and J. Daniel Hays, eds. *The Baker Illustrated Bible Background Commentary.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2020., p.722-723.
(2) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.361.
(3) Edwards, James R. *The Gospel According to Luke. Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015., p.90-91.
(4) Harris, Murray J. *John (Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament)*. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2015., p.41.
(5) Harris, Murray J. *John (Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament)*. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2015., p.41.
(6) Harris, Murray J. *John (Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament)*. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2015., p.42.
(7) Buzzard, Justin. *John: A 12-Week Study*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2014., p.20.
(8) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.198.
(9) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.199.

(10) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.703.
(11) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.703.
(12) Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007., p.424.
(13) Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007., p.424-425.
(14) Harris, Murray J. *John (Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament)*. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2015., p.42.
(15) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.702-703.
(16) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.703.
(17) Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007., p.363.
(18) Carson, D. A. ed. *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015., p.2153.
(19) Carson, D. A. ed. *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015., p.2153.
(20) Grudem, Wayne, ed. *ESV Study Bible*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008.,p.1850.
(21) Edwards, James R. *The Gospel According to Luke. Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015., p.96.
(22) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.706.
(23) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.156.
(24) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009., p.258.
(25) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.707.
(26) Packer, J. I. *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1993., p.137-138.
(27) Stein, Robert H. *Luke*. The New American Commentary: Volume 24. Nashville, TN: B&H, 1992., p.139.
(28) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.249.
(29) Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008., p.239.

(30) Packer, J. I. *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1993., p.137-138.
(31) Buzzard, Justin. *John: A 12-Week Study*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2014., p.24.
(32) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009., p.258.
(33) Carson, D. A. *The Gospel According to John. Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991., p.138.
(34) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011., p.166.
(35) Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008., p.238.
(36)) *Nelson's Complete Book Of Bible Maps And Charts*, 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010., p.307.
(37) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.361.
(38) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.363.
(39) Stein, Robert H. *Luke*. The New American Commentary: Volume 24. Nashville, TN: B&H, 1992., p.138.
(40) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009., p.257.
(41) Bock, Darrell L. *A Theology of Luke and Acts: God’s Promised Program, Realized for All*
Nations. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2012., p.218.
(42) Cole, R. A. *The Gospel according to Mark: An Introduction and Commentary*. *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008., p.67.
(43) Duvall, J. Scott, and J. Daniel Hays, eds. *The Baker Illustrated Bible Background Commentary.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2020., p.722-723.
(44) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011., p.166.
(45) Packer, J. I. *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1993., p.137-138.

Bibliography

Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007.

Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009.

Bock, Darrell L. *A Theology of Luke and Acts: God's Promised Program, Realized for All Nations*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2012.

Buzzard, Justin. *John: A 12-Week Study*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2014.

Carson, D. A. ed. *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015., 1949, 2021.

Carson, D. A. *The Gospel According to John. Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991.

Cole, R. A. *The Gospel according to Mark: An Introduction and Commentary*. *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008.

Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011.

Duvall, J. Scott, and J. Daniel Hays, eds. *The Baker Illustrated Bible Background Commentary.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2020.

Edwards, James R. *The Gospel According to Luke. Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015.

Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995.

Grudem, Wayne, ed. *ESV Study Bible*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008.

Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012.

Harris, Murray J. *John (Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament)*. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2015.

Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.

Nelson's Complete Book Of Bible Maps And Charts, 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010.

Packer, J. I. *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1993.

Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008.

Stein, Robert H. *Luke*. The New American Commentary: Volume 24. Nashville, TN: B&H, 1992.

The Temptation of Jesus Christ

“If You are the Son of God,” he said, “throw Yourself down. For it is written: ‘He will command His angels concerning You, and they will lift You up in their hands, so that You will not strike Your foot against a stone.’” Jesus replied, *“It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”*
Matthew 4:6–7 (BSB)

Introduction:

The Temptation of Jesus Christ, as seen in the above verse, is an event, unparalleled in history. In fact, Jesus' encounter with Satan (the devil) stands above any similar records, such as are found in the Old Testament, intertestamental literature, rabbinic literature or the Dead Sea Scrolls. (1) Found throughout the Bible, God often tests the faith of people (Abraham in Genesis 22:1; Job in Job 23:10; Hezekiah in 2 Chronicles 32:31) and - while not tempting anyone Himself - God, sometimes, allows Satan to tempt individuals (Job 1-2), but is *never* the cause of evil: Jesus Christ faces *both* God's testing and Satan's temptation. (2) But Why?

The following is an investigation to provide some answers to this question. Jesus' wilderness temptation - following his baptism - is recorded in all three so-called 'Synoptic Gospels' (Mark 1:12-13; Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13) and is, as will be seen, a demonstration of Christ's readiness to defeat Satan and sin, as our unique, sinless Savior. (3)

At once the Spirit drove Jesus into the wilderness, and He was there for forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and the angels ministered to Him.
Mark 1:12–13 (BSB)

Commentary:

Beginning with the Gospel of Mark - the shortest of all records about Jesus' temptation - we nevertheless have the basic elements also contained in Matthew and Luke. As we can see here, right after His baptism, the Holy Spirit leads Jesus "into the wilderness" (v.12) to prepare Him, as Jesus is tested by Satan "for forty days" (v.13) - symbolic of Old Testament saints struggling in the desert, such as Moses in Exodus 24:18 and Elijah in 1 Kings 19:8, 15 - and also as analogy of Israel's testing and preparation (forty years in the wilderness): However, where Israel often failed, due to disobedience and being unfaithful, Jesus succeeds (which we learn about in more detail in Matthew and Luke). (4)

The point here is that Jesus is dealing with a real enemy, namely Satan (the enemy of God and our enemy, too), which continues on as Jesus deals repeatedly with fallen angels ('demons' in Mark 1:24, 27, 34 and Satan himself, as recorded in the Gospels) - the severity of Satan's attack to tempt Jesus can be seen by "angels" ministering to Him (v.13) - which sets the

stage for us to understand the reality of the spiritual struggle between Satan and God, a battle of cosmic dimensions, and eschatological implications for the end time, when Satan is eternally defeated (Revelation 20:10).

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, He was hungry. The tempter came to Him and said, "If You are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." But Jesus answered, *"It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"* Then the devil took Him to the holy city and set Him on the pinnacle of the temple. "If You are the Son of God," he said, "throw Yourself down. For it is written: 'He will command His angels concerning You, and they will lift You up in their hands, so that You will not strike Your foot against a stone.'" Jesus replied, *"It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"* Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. "All this I will give You," he said, "if You will fall down and worship me." *"Away from Me, Satan!"* Jesus declared. *"For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.'"* Then the devil left Him, and angels came and ministered to Him.
Matthew 4:1–11 (BSB)

Commentary:

More detailed than Mark, Matthew's account shows us the nature of Satan's temptations and how Jesus responds to each of them. In the first temptation, the devil tries to command Jesus to tell stones to become bread (v.3), since the devil recognizes Jesus as God's Son, (a better translation, instead of "if," can be "*Since* you are the Son of God…") - Satan is trying to get Jesus *not* to do God's will. (6)

We should take careful note, of *how* Jesus defends Himself here. Christ's main and only weapon here is Scripture, which Jesus uses by quoting the Old Testament, that is Deuteronomy (8:3 - first temptation; 6:16 - second temptation; 6:13 - third temptation) to refute the "tempter" (Satan), thus in this first case Jesus says: "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God," (v.4) - and in the second case, the devil himself quotes Scripture (Psalm 91:11-12), yet misapplies it. (7)

We see here the importance of God's Word, as defensive weapon for all believers, when used appropriately and in context, just as Jesus does in His last refute of the devil (v.10) in which we realize that it is Christ who is in charge, as He commands the devil to leave "Away from Me, Satan!" This is important, because even though Jesus is 'God in the Flesh,' He also shares in our own human limitations, seen here when Matthew records that "he was hungry" (v.2) which shows the reality of his physical weakness, and as He defends Himself against the devil's temptations, through the power of God's Word - His defeat of Satan, lines up, with the needs and God's provision and care, since "angels came and ministered to him" (v.11). (8)

Then Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, where for forty days He was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and when they had ended, He was hungry. The devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread." But Jesus answered, *"It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone.'"* Then the devil led Him up to a high place and showed Him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. "I will give You authority over all these kingdoms and all their glory," he said. "For it has been relinquished to me, and I can give it to anyone I wish. So if You worship me, it will all be Yours." But Jesus answered, *"It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.'"* Then the devil led Him to Jerusalem and set Him on the pinnacle of the temple. "If You are the Son of God," he said, "throw Yourself down from here. For it is written: 'He will command His angels concerning You to guard You carefully; and they will lift You up in their hands, so that You will not strike Your foot against a stone.'" But Jesus answered, *"It also says, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"* When the devil had finished every temptation, he left Him until an opportune time.
Luke 4:1–13 (BSB)

Commentary:

Luke's account of Jesus' temptation is similar to Matthew, but here the order of the last two temptations is reversed, a chronological sequence is not in view here (9), and there are other details not found in Matthew. For example, we are told that Jesus "returned from the Jordan" (v.1) but the exact location of the temptation is not mentioned, and remains unknown. (10)

What matters here, as we follow along the events, is that it is the Holy Spirit and not the devil who initiates the conflict Jesus faces (“led by the Spirit” in v.1) revealing God’s sovereignty and control over all events that transpire (11) - and explaining Jesus’ sinlessness, since it is only Jesus (and only Him) who resists all temptations faithfully. (12)

The term ‘devil’ is a Greek translation of the Hebrew word ‘Satan’ emphasizing the supernatural (yet real) existence of this fallen angel. (13) Like in Matthew’s account, the first temptation of our Lord is the same, and Jesus defends Himself by using the Scriptures (“it is written” in v.4, v.8 and “it also says” in v.12) - which reminds us as believers, to arm ourselves using the “sword of the Spirit” (Ephesians 6:17) just as Jesus does, when we are tempted. (14)

The second temptation in Luke (v.5-7), is possibly a visionary experience, in which the devil refers to himself, to Jesus, but at no point to God, so here we see that the devil claims to have an authority, and yet it is not equal to God’s authority, since it is God in His divine sovereignty who allows Satan to operate, within God-given boundaries. (15)

The third temptation, which points to Christ’s journey and destiny in Jerusalem (“the devil led him to Jerusalem” in v.9) relates to the Jerusalem temple. (16) it is here, that we see how Jesus remains in God’s will and does not give in to temptation, but resists the devil in obedience to God: So, coupled with the foregoing genealogy of Jesus (Luke 3:23-38) two analogies are developed, namely, the contrast between Jesus and Adam, as well as Jesus and Israel - Jesus succeeds where Adam failed (Genesis 3), likewise Jesus succeeds where the Israelites failed (Exodus 4:22-23; Psalm 95:8-11). (17)

Note, that the contrast between the first Adam and Jesus as the second Adam, supposedly appears in 1 John 2:16 (18) - however, this is inconclusive, since the temptations Jesus faces are all messianic in nature, which means they are unique to Jesus’ temptations as God’s Son. (19) What matters most is that Jesus was truly tempted, and yet He remained obedient to God in all of them.

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who was tempted in every way that we are, yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.
Hebrews 4:15–16 (BSB)

Conclusion:

So, what are we to make of all this? While in the intertestamental period some Jews believed that in some way or another, Satan had gained control over the earth, Jesus' victory - after being tempted by Satan - reveals the falsehood of such beliefs. (20) Jesus succeeds where all others have failed.

Why did God let Jesus be tested? For one, this reveal *who* He is (God's Son) and *why* he came (to accomplish His Messianic servant mission to atone for our sins) (21), and triumph over sin, Satan, evil on the cross, following His resurrection and ascension. Another reason, for Jesus' temptation in the wilderness is God demonstrating Jesus' sinlessness, since the nature of Satan's temptations is for Jesus to compromise and possibly avoid the suffering on the cross, and hard path ahead of Him. (22)

Could Jesus have sinned? This question can be affirmatively answered with 'No,' since even though Satan's temptations are genuine, geared towards the human side of Jesus - the union of Christ's human and divine natures in His person, enabled Him not to sin. (23) In other words, part of God's purpose for allowing Jesus to be tempted, is to reveal that Christ could not sin - this means that Christ, in His deity, exercised full authority over His humanity (John 10:18). (24) Note, that even though Christ in His divinity always does the Father's will (John 5:19, 30), this is not without a struggle, given His sinless human nature, as we see when Jesus prays in Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36-45; Mark 14:32-42; Luke 22:39-46). (25)

Lastly, we learn from Jesus' temptation that God is absolutely sovereign, and never allows any temptation, unless it furthers His sovereignly designed plan and purpose. (26) Specifically, Satan approaches Jesus in ways that are not always immediately recognizable as diabolic and evil, since having food to eat (first temptation) is a real human need - and yet, each and every enticement is deceptive, since given his nature, all the devil can ever do is evil, since he is God's (and our) adversary. (27)

Most importantly, Satan (ab)uses God's Word, as seen here, and as seen in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:1). In this way, we realize that one of the main strategies of the devil is to get us to doubt God, not trusting in God and His perfect plan, purpose and timing - the same thing Satan does when testing Jesus in the wilderness.

As Christians, we are called to emulate Jesus, in that we not only trust in Him, but especially in His Word (the Bible) - a good example being the church in Berea (Acts 17:11) - knowing God's Word and spending as much time as we can in the Bible, since the devil also knows Scripture. (28)

Imitating Christ, as the Holy Spirit enables us, helps us remain obedient to God. Also, surrendering to God, that is to Jesus Christ as our personal Lord and Savior in *prayer* (29), alongside immersing ourselves in Scripture, is found in the 'Lord's Prayer' (which Christ provides for us): "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." (Matthew 6:13). Amen.

Notes

(1) Edwards, James R. *The Gospel According to Luke. Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015., p.99.
(2) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011., p.1435.
(3) Agan, Jimmy. *Luke: A 12-Week Study*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2015., p.19.
(4) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.708.
(5) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.708.
(6) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009., p.260.
(7) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009., p.261.
(8) Grudem, Wayne A. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand
Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000., p.532.
(9) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009., p.260.
(10) Edwards, James R. *The Gospel According to Luke. Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015., p.100.
(11) Stein, Robert H. *Luke*. The New American Commentary: Volume 24. Nashville, TN: B&H, 1992., p.145.

(12) Agan, Jimmy. *Luke: A 12-Week Study*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2015., p.24.
(13) Stein, Robert H. *Luke*. The New American Commentary: Volume 24. Nashville, TN: B&H, 1992., p.146.
(14) Stein, Robert H. *Luke*. The New American Commentary: Volume 24. Nashville, TN: B&H, 1992., p.146.
(15) Edwards, James R. *The Gospel According to Luke. Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015., p.101.
(16) Nelson, Thomas. *NIV Chronological Study Bible*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2014., p.1102.
(17) Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020., p.323.
(18) *Nelson's Complete Book Of Bible Maps And Charts*, 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010., p.325.
(19) Stein, Robert H. *Luke*. The New American Commentary: Volume 24. Nashville, TN: B&H, 1992., p.144.
(20) Nelson, Thomas. *NIV Chronological Study Bible*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2014., p.1102.
(21) Fee, Gordon D. and Douglas K. Stuart, *How to Read the Bible Book by Book: A Guided Tour*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014., p.272.
(22) Grudem, Wayne A. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand
Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000., p.536.
(23) Grudem, Wayne A. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand
Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000., p.539.
(24) Enns, Paul P. *The Moody Handbook of Theology: Revised and Expanded*. Chicago, IL:
Moody Publishers, 2014., p.250-251.
(25) Packer, J. I. *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1993., p.127-128.
(26) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009., p.260.
(27) Edwards, James R. *The Gospel According to Luke. Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015., p.100.
(28) Stein, Robert H. *Luke*. The New American Commentary: Volume 24. Nashville, TN: B&H, 1992., p.150.
(29) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011., p.1436.

Bibliography

Agan, Jimmy. *Luke: A 12-Week Study*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2015.

Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009.

Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011.

Edwards, James R. *The Gospel According to Luke. Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015.

Enns, Paul P. *The Moody Handbook of Theology: Revised and Expanded*. Chicago, IL:
Moody Publishers, 2014.

Fee, Gordon D. and Douglas K. Stuart, *How to Read the Bible Book by Book: A Guided Tour*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014.

Grudem, Wayne A. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand
Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000.

Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.

Nelson's Complete Book Of Bible Maps And Charts, 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010.

Nelson, Thomas. *NIV Chronological Study Bible*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2014.

Packer, J. I. *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1993.

Stein, Robert H. *Luke*. The New American Commentary: Volume 24. Nashville, TN: B&H, 1992.

Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020.

Prophecies About And By Jesus Christ

"At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and all the tribes of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. And He will send out His angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other."

Matthew 24:30–31 (BSB)

1. Introduction:

The above Bible verses are a prophecy Jesus Christ makes about His Second Coming (Judgment Day) which has not yet taken place. In the Bible a prophecy is a proclamation on behalf of God, more specifically, declaring something that is going to happen. (a1) In the Old Testament, there are different kinds of prophecy. For example, the prophets Isaiah and Amos refer

to events that had not yet been fulfilled at the time the prophecy was made, but in the course of time did occur (the Babylonian exile in Isaiah 42:18-25; the return from the exile in Amos 9:14-15). (a2) As such, in the New Testament, the first Christian interpreters, that is the Apostles, referred to Old Testament Scriptures to support their witness that Jesus is the promised Messiah. (a3)

The opening verses above are part of the teaching of Jesus on the Mount of Olives (called the 'Olivet Discourse') in which Jesus relates future events. (a4) Here, and as Jesus begins His ministry (Luke 4:18) we see Him often alluding to and quoting words from the Old Testament prophets. In a similar way, the Gospel writers, especially Matthew, reveal how Jesus' life, death and resurrection are a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. (a5)

The following is broken down into two parts: The first part deals with prophecies about Jesus, and the second part deals with prophecies by Jesus - focusing primarily on the Olivet Discourse - with prophecies that have been fulfilled, and those not fulfilled yet (such as Christ's Second Coming).

"And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. He will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."
Genesis 3:15 (BSB)

2. Prophecies About Jesus:

As for prophecies about Jesus we have to take a close look at the Old Testament. Here we find that over the time span covered in the Old Testament, Yahweh, the God of Israel, speaks through many different prophets giving them messages prophesying a future deliverance by the Messiah, so-called 'Messianic prophecies.' (a6)

It is in this context, as we consider the above verse, after Adam and Eve had sinned against God in the Garden of Eden, having given into the temptation by Satan (the devil), that God pronounces judgment on the devil ("the serpent" in v.14) along with making an amazing promise: Since mankind is unable to make itself right with God by their own efforts, here, God issues the first Messianic prophecy in the so-called 'Protoevangelium' ('the first Gospel') announcing the victory of the Messiah over Satan, sin and death (putting enmity between the devil's seed and the woman's seed, i.e. her offspring, who "will crush your (Satan's) head," and you (the devil) "will

strike his (i.e. Jesus') heel" enjoying a temporary victory, as Jesus dies on the cross (v.15). (a7)

Here begins the astonishing sequence of Messianic prophecies found in the Old Testament which are then fulfilled in the New Testament in and through Jesus Christ, often with a great level of detail. (a8) We see here unique prophecies that pertain to Christ's lineage, birth, life, death, victory and His divine reign, following His resurrection and ascension to be finalized at His Second Coming (Judgment Day). (a9) The Apostles in the New Testament used typological interpretations (Old Testament ideas, events, symbols and patterns) that anticipate God's divine activity at a later time in and through Jesus Christ - with Matthew and Hebrews best illustrating this typological approach. (a10)

"The Spirit of the Lord is on Me, because He has anointed Me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." Then He rolled up the scroll, returned it to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fixed on Him, and He began by saying, ***"Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."***
Luke 4:18–21 (BSB)

3. Prophecies By Jesus

As Jesus comes on the scene in His life and ministry we come across many prophecies that are fulfilled by Him - as we see in the above passage -

and prophecies that are not yet fulfilled. Jesus begins His ministry in a Galilean synagogue as He announces the personal fulfilment of the Old Testament passage of Isaiah (Isaiah 35:5-6) and as His ministry continues (after His predecessor John the Baptist has been imprisoned), Jesus reassures John in Luke 7:21-23 that He is indeed the Messiah, by fulfilling the prophecy in Isaiah 35:5-6 of healing the blind, the deaf and the lame. (a11) Notably, Jesus is the only one in the Bible who has ever healed a person born blind, pointing to His unique divinity as Messiah.

As the Gospels unfold, Jesus underlines His divine prophetic authority, making predictions that come to pass as the events unfold - He points to His own divine authority, mentioning that His words will never pass away (Matthew 24:35), He predicts Peter's threefold denial (Matthew 26:34; John 13:38) and consistently predicts His death and resurrection during His ministry (Matthew 16:21; 17:22-23; 20:17-19). (a12)

The so-called Olivet Discourse (located on the Mount of Olives in the vicinity of Jerusalem) reveals Jesus prophesying about events that have been fulfilled and events that have not been fulfilled yet. The Olivet Discourse is recorded in Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21:5-38. (a13) Interpreting this discourse is challenging, because Jesus addresses both the destruction of the Jerusalem temple (fulfilled in AD 70) and His own Second Coming - however, the main theme Jesus is emphasizing, is to be prepared for His return at any time and to remain faithful. (a14)

In response to the disciples asking Him about the temple destruction, Jesus prophecies about the near future of this event, which came to pass as the Roman general Titus besieged Jerusalem in AD 70, which is recorded in great detail in Luke's Gospel (Luke 21:20, 24). (a15)

In response to the question put to Him about the distant future (not yet fulfilled) Jesus talks about the event of His Second Coming eschatologically (that is 'the end of time'). (a16) In Matthew 24:30-31 Jesus quotes the Old Testament (Daniel 7:13-14) in a modified way, emphasizing Christ being in the presence of God and then arriving on the clouds. (a17) In this context, Jesus states:

> ***"No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."***
> Matthew 24:36 (BSB)

The same verse is also in Mark 13:32. The best explanation for Jesus' statement, indicating His apparent ignorance about the day or hour of His

Second Coming, relates to His incarnation - as ‘God-Man’ Jesus intentionally lays aside His divine omniscience, since He is also a real human being. (a18)

The significance of this laying aside His divine privileges at that time, is that all Christians are called to be prepared and alert, since Jesus could return at any time - a call Jesus illustrates in Matthew 25 in three parables that emphasize readiness (Matthew 25:1-13), to be faithful stewards of time and resources (Matthew 25:14-30) and providing and caring for fellow Christians, thereby reflecting God’s love (Matthew 25:31-46). (a19) As such, this unfulfilled prophecy of our Lord’s Second Coming unfolds in the Book of Revelation (Revelation 5:1-14) where v.10 echoes the Old Testament (Daniel 7:22, 27) prophesying about the redeemed saints (that is our fellow Christians) who will rule with Christ in God’s eternal Kingdom. (a20)

4. Conclusion:

In summary, in terms of Old Testament prophecies made about the Messiah, Jesus Christ is unique in that in and through His life, ministry, death and resurrection many have been fulfilled, while Christ’s return (Second Coming) has not yet come to pass.

As seen in the Old Testament prophecies about Jesus, we realize that all events in His life and ministry are fulfillments of Old Testament prophetic declarations. (a21) Immediately, after Christ’s resurrection, He Himself points back to these Old Testament declarations - opening up Scripture to two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:25-27, 32) and His Apostles (Luke 24:44-48). The purpose of these first ‘Bible studies’ by Jesus is to help His followers at the time (and us today) understand that as Messiah He has come to provide salvation for repentant sinners, thereby providing right standing in our previously estranged relationship with God. (a22)

The prophecies by Jesus, as seen recorded in the Olivet Discourse, pertain both to fulfilled and unfulfilled prophecy. The former are a unique demonstration of Christ’s divine authority, since His future predictions are infallible, as we see in His prediction of the destruction of the Jerusalem temple (which occurred in AD 70) - Jesus calling people to Himself in such an authoritative way, combined with the scope and detail of His prophecies coming to pass, makes Him more than an Old Testament prophet, since as ‘God in the Flesh,’ He predicts and promises the coming of the Holy Spirit (which took place at Pentecost in Acts 2). (a23)

The destruction of the temple in AD 70 (as fulfilled prophecy of Christ) points to the coming of Jesus Christ (‘the Son of Man’) at the end of the age and functions as a preview of Judgment Day. (a24) In this way, the apostles

identified Old Testament prophecies fulfilled in Jesus as He teaches about God's kingdom, always pointing directly to Himself as Messiah. (a25) Since Jesus at the time of the Olivet Discourse acknowledges His human limitation of not knowing the time of His Second Coming (Matthew 24:36; Mark 13:32), as Christians we must take this seriously, since we are limited.

Therefore, as believers we are warned not to participate in end-time speculation (fortune-telling, etc.) attempting to ascertain the time of Christ's Second Coming. Instead, we are to be prepared for this event, by faithfully working for our Lord, until He returns (Matthew 24:45-51). (a26) So, just as Jesus ascended into heaven (Acts 1:1-11), He will one day return from heaven, at a time that cannot be predicted by anyone, which should keep us vigilant in our God-given work (a27) that we may be joyful at the final judgment:

> "Behold, I am coming soon, and My reward is with Me, to give to each one according to what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End."
>
> Revelation 22:12–13 (BSB)

Appendix A*

OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECIES OF CHRIST		
Topic	Prophecy	Passage
Lineage of Christ	Virgin Birth Lineage of Shem Lineage of Abraham Lineage of Isaac Lineage of Jacob Lineage of Judah Lineage of David	Genesis 3:15 Genesis 9:26 Genesis 12:2 Genesis 17:19 Genesis 25:23; 28:13 Genesis 49:10 2 Samuel 7:12-16
Birth of Christ	Manner of birth Birth Place	Isaiah 7:14 Micah 5:2
Life of Christ	Christ's forerunner Christ's mission Christ's ministry Christ's teaching Christ's presentation Christ's rejection	Isaiah 40:3 Isaiah 61:1 Isaiah 53:4 Psalm 78:2 Zechariah 9:9 Psalm 118:22
Death of Christ	Jesus' painful death Jesus' violent death	Psalm 22 Isaiah 52-53
Victory of Christ	Christ's resurrection Christ's ascension	Psalm 16:10 Psalm 68:18
Reign of Christ	As Sovereign king Exalted from Jerusalem With governmental authority In peace and justice Bringing joyful restoration	Psalm 2 Psalm 24 Isaiah 9:6-7 Isaiah 11 Isaiah 35:1-10

* Adapted from Enns, p.323. Enns, Paul P. *The Moody Handbook of Theology: Revised and Expanded*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014., p.323.

Appendix B**

FULFILLED PROPHECIES CONCERNING CHRIST		
Topic	Old Testament Prophecy	New Testament Fulfillment
From Line of Abraham	Genesis 12:2	Matthew 1:1; Galatians 3:16
From Line of Judah	Genesis 49:10	Matthew 1:2
From Line of David	2 Samuel 7:12-16	Matthew 1:1
His Virgin birth	Isaiah 7:14	Matthew 1:23
Born in Bethlehem	Micah 5:2	Matthew 2:6
Christ's Forerunner: John	Isaiah 40:3; Malachi 3:1	Matthew 3:3
Jesus as king	Numbers 24:17; Psalm 2:6	Matthew 21:5
Jesus as Prophet	Deuteronomy 18:15-18	Acts 3:22-23
Jesus as Priest	Psalm 110:4	Hebrews 5:6-10
Bearing the world's sins	Psalm 22:1	Matthew 27:46
Jesus is Ridiculed	Psalm 22:7, 8	Matthew 27:39, 43
Hands and feet pierced	Psalm 22:16	John 20:25
No bones broken	Psalm 22:17	John 19:33-36
Soldiers gambling	Psalm 22:18	John 19:24
Christ praying	Psalm 22:24	Matthew 26:39, Hebrews 5:7
Jesus is Disfigured	Isaiah 52:14	John 19:1
Christ's Scourging and death	Isaiah 53:5	John 19:1, 18
Christ's Resurrection	Psalm 16:10; 22:22	Matthew 28:6; Acts 2:27-28
Christ's Ascension	Psalm 68:18	Luke24:50-53; Acts 1:9-11

Adapted from Enns, p.323. Enns, Paul P. *The Moody Handbook of Theology: Revised and Expanded*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014., p.235.

Appendix C

Olivet Discourse of Jesus Christ
Matthew (BSB)

Temple Destruction and Other Signs

(Mark 13:1–8; Luke 21:5–9)

24 1As Jesus left the temple and was walking away, His disciples came up to
Him to point out its buildings.

2"Do you see all these things?" He replied. "Truly I tell you, not one stone
here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down."

3While Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him
privately. "Tell us," they said, "when will these things happen, and what will
be the sign of Your coming and of the end of the age?"

4Jesus answered, "See to it that no one deceives you. 5For many will come in
My name, claiming, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. 6You will hear of
wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. These things
must happen, but the end is still to come. 7Nation will rise against nation,
and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in
various places. 8All these are the beginning of birth pains.

Witnessing to All Nations

(Mark 13:9–13; Luke 21:10–19)

9Then they will deliver you over to be persecuted and killed, and you will be
hated by all nations because of My name. 10At that time many will fall away
and will betray and hate one another, 11and many false prophets will arise
and mislead many.

12Because of the multiplication of wickedness, the love of most will grow
cold. 13But the one who perseveres to the end will be saved.

14And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a
testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

The Abomination of Desolation

(Mark 13:14–23; Luke 21:20–24)

15So when you see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination of desolation,’
described by the prophet Daniel (let the reader understand), 16then let those
who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 17Let no one on the housetop come
down to retrieve anything from his house. 18And let no one in the field return
for his cloak.

19How miserable those days will be for pregnant and nursing mothers! 20Pray
that your flight will not occur in the winter or on the Sabbath. 21For at that
time there will be great tribulation, unmatched from the beginning of the
world until now, and never to be seen again. 22If those days had not been cut
short, nobody would be saved. But for the sake of the elect, those days will
be cut short.

23At that time, if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There He
is!’ do not believe it. 24For false Christs and false prophets will appear and
perform great signs and wonders that would deceive even the elect, if that
were possible. 25See, I have told you in advance.

The Return of the Son of Man

(Mark 13:24–27; Luke 21:25–28)

26So if they tell you, ‘There He is in the wilderness,’ do not go out; or, ‘Here
He is in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it. 27For just as the lightning comes
from the east and flashes as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son
of Man. 28Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather.

29Immediately after the tribulation of those days:

‘The sun will be darkened,
and the moon will not give its light;
the stars will fall from the sky,
and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.’

30At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and all the
tribes of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the
clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. 31And He will send out His
angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather His elect from the four
winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.

The Lesson of the Fig Tree

(Mark 13:28–31; Luke 21:29–33)

32Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its branches become
tender and sprout leaves, you know that summer is near. 33So also, when you
see all these things, you will know that He is near, right at the door. 34Truly I

tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have happened. 35Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will never pass away.

Readiness at Any Hour

(Genesis 6:1–7; Mark 13:32–37; Luke 12:35–48)

36No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. 37As it was in the days of Noah, so will it be at the coming of the Son of Man. 38For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark. 39And they were oblivious, until the flood came and swept them all away. So will it be at the coming of the Son of Man. 40Two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. 41Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left.

42Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day on which your Lord will come. 43But understand this: If the homeowner had known in which watch of the night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. 44For this reason, you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour you do not expect.

45Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of his household, to give the others their food at the proper time? 46Blessed is that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. 47Truly I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions.

48But suppose that servant is wicked and says in his heart, ‘My master will be away a long time.’ 49And he begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. 50The master of that servant will come on a day he does not expect and at an hour he does not anticipate. 51Then he will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Appendix D

Olivet Discourse of Jesus Christ
Mark (BSB)

Temple Destruction and Other Signs

(Matthew 24:1–8; Luke 21:5–9)

13 1As Jesus was leaving the temple, one of His disciples said to Him,
“Teacher, look at the magnificent stones and buildings!”

2“Do you see all these great buildings?” Jesus replied. “Not one stone here
will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.”

3While Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter,
James, John, and Andrew asked Him privately, 4“Tell us, when will these
things happen? And what will be the sign that they are about to be fulfilled?”

5Jesus began by telling them, “See to it that no one deceives you. 6Many will
come in My name, claiming, ‘I am He,’ and will deceive many. 7When you
hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. These things must
happen, but the end is still to come. 8Nation will rise against nation, and
kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places, as
well as famines. These are the beginning of birth pains.

Witnessing to All Nations

(Matthew 24:9–14; Luke 21:10–19)

9So be on your guard. You will be delivered over to the councils and beaten in
the synagogues. On My account you will stand before governors and kings as
witnesses to them. 10And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all the
nations. 11But when they arrest you and hand you over, do not worry
beforehand what to say. Instead, speak whatever you are given at that time,
for it will not be you speaking, but the Holy Spirit.

12Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child. Children will rise
against their parents and have them put to death. 13You will be hated by

everyone because of My name, but the one who perseveres to the end will be saved.

The Abomination of Desolation

(Matthew 24:15–25; Luke 21:20–24)

14So when you see the abomination of desolation standing where it should
not be (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the
mountains. 15Let no one on the housetop go back inside to retrieve anything
from his house. 16And let no one in the field return for his cloak.

17How miserable those days will be for pregnant and nursing mothers! 18Pray
that this will not occur in the winter. 19For those will be days of tribulation
unmatched from the beginning of God's creation until now, and never to be
seen again. 20If the Lord had not cut short those days, nobody would be
saved. But for the sake of the elect, whom He has chosen, He has cut them
short.

21At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There He
is!' do not believe it. 22For false Christs and false prophets will appear and
perform signs and wonders that would deceive even the elect, if that were
possible. 23So be on your guard; I have told you everything in advance.

The Return of the Son of Man

(Matthew 24:26–31; Luke 21:25–28)

24But in those days, after that tribulation:

'The sun will be darkened,
and the moon will not give its light;
25the stars will fall from the sky,
and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.'

26At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great
power and glory. 27And He will send out the angels to gather His elect from
the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

The Lesson of the Fig Tree

(Matthew 24:32–35; Luke 21:29–33)

28Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its branches become
tender and sprout leaves, you know that summer is near. 29So also, when you
see these things happening, know that He is near, right at the door. 30Truly I
tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have
happened. 31Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will never pass
away.

Readiness at Any Hour

(Matthew 24:36–51; Luke 12:35–48)

32 No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor
the Son, but only the Father. 33 Be on your guard and stay alert! For you do
not know when the appointed time will come.

34 It is like a man going on a journey who left his house, put each servant in
charge of his own task, and instructed the doorkeeper to keep watch.
35 Therefore keep watch, because you do not know when the master of the
house will return—whether in the evening, at midnight, when the rooster
crows, or in the morning. 36 Otherwise, he may arrive without notice and find
you sleeping. 37 And what I say to you, I say to everyone: Keep watch!”

Notes

(a1) Erickson, Millard J. *The Concise Dictionary of Christian Theology*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001., p.162.
(a2) Klein, William W., et al. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017., p. 483.
(a3) Klein, William W., et al. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017., p.77.
(a4) Nelson, Thomas. *NIV Chronological Study Bible*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2014., p.1219.
(a5) *Holy Bible NLT*. Filament-enabled Ed. Carol Stream: Tyndale House Publishers, 2015, p.z12.
(a6) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011., p.1179.
(a7) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011., p.1179.
(a8) See Appendix A and B for OT prophecies about Christ and fulfilled prophecies related to Christ.
(a9) Enns, Paul P. *The Moody Handbook of Theology: Revised and Expanded*. Chicago, IL:
Moody Publishers, 2014., p.230-234.
(a10) Klein, William W., et al. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017., p.78.
(a11) Klein, William W., et al. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017., p.77.
(a12) Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008., p.177.
(a13) See Appendix C and D for the accounts of the Olivet Discourse in Matthew and Mark.
(a14) Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020., p.234.
(a15) Nelson, Thomas. *NIV Chronological Study Bible*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2014., p.1219.
(a16) Nelson, Thomas. *NIV Chronological Study Bible*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2014., p.1219.
(a17) Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007., p.87.

(a18) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.935-936.
(a19) Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020., p.285.
(a20) Beale, G. K. with David H. Campbell. *Revelation: A Shorter Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015., p.117.
(a21) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011., p.1180.
(a22) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011., p.1179.
(a23) Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008., p.179.
(a24) Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020., p.235.
(a25) Klein, William W., et al. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017., p.77.
(a26) Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008., p.812.
(a27) Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007., p.90.

Bibliography

Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007.

Beale, G. K. with David H. Campbell. *Revelation: A Shorter Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015.

Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011.

Enns, Paul P. *The Moody Handbook of Theology: Revised and Expanded*. Chicago, IL:
Moody Publishers, 2014.

Erickson, Millard J. *The Concise Dictionary of Christian Theology*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001.

Holy Bible NLT. Filament-enabled Ed. Carol Stream: Tyndale House Publishers, 2015.

Klein, William W., et al. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017.

Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.

Nelson, Thomas. *NIV Chronological Study Bible*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2014.

Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008.

Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020.

Names and Titles of Jesus Christ

"This is the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God."
Mark 1:1 (BSB)

Introduction

What is in a name? As the above verse from the Gospel of Mark records, we find - along with the 'Gospel' (Good News) - the name of Jesus Christ and two of many other titles of His (here: "Messiah" and "Son of God"). The two most common ways Christians refer to Jesus is Jesus (derived from Hebrew *Joshua*, meaning 'Yahweh is Salvation') and Christ (derived from Greek *Christos*, which means 'Anointed One' or 'Messiah'). (b1)

As God gradually reveals Himself in the Bible (moving from Old Testament to New Testament) there are different so-called 'covenants' God makes with specific people (Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, Moses and King David). A covenant is a promise made by God and places His chosen people into a relationship with Himself.

The so-called 'Passover,' as part of the Mosaic covenant (the Old Testament Law), based on God's grace served as a substitution (turning away God's wrath from people's sins by means of the blood of the 'Passover Lamb') which is part of God (the Lord, Yahweh) revealing His grace and sovereignty - Jesus Christ, then, is the singular new (and last) 'Passover Lamb,' through whom salvation is possible by faith in Him alone, as God in His holiness and eternal plan has revealed Himself (Genesis 15). (b2)

It is here that the different names and titles of Jesus Christ come to the forefront. (b3) The following is an exploration of selected names and titles of Christ.

Jesus Christ

Since the name Jesus derived from Hebrew ‘Joshua’ (Greek: ‘Yahweh [the Lord] saves’) was a popular name in Jesus’ time, the Gospel of Matthew occasionally uses ‘Jesus of Nazareth’ (Matthew 26:71) as a means of differentiation - Jesus, as in the rest of the New Testament, is the focus point of the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John), since Jesus fulfills what the Old Testament had been pointing to - that is, Jesus is the long-expected Messiah (aka. ‘son of David), the one and only Savior of the world. (b4)

Christ

As mentioned in the introduction, the name comes from the Greek word *Christos* (meaning ‘Anointed One’) and has an Old Testament background, since others and especially Old Testament Kings are anointed as part of God’s divine choice (1 Samuel 10:1; 16:13), which is the same concept used for Jesus Christ in the New Testament. (b5)

Jesus Himself never objects to the description “Christ” (Mark 9:41; 12:35; Matthew 23:10) and even describes Himself by this title (John 4:25) and also after His resurrection (Luke 24:26-27) and so the title most likely originated with Jesus. (b6)

“Christ” is the title most often used in the Gospel of Luke, first mentioned in the angelic announcement (Luke 2:11), referred to as a self-description for and by John the Baptist (Luke 3:15-16) and continued in the Book of Acts (Acts 2:38; 4:10; 9:34; 10:36; 10:48; 15:26; 16:18) making Jesus the trustworthy focus as redemptive deliverer of humankind. (b7) As we see, especially in Acts and Paul’s epistles, the term “Christ” becomes almost synonymous with who He is and almost a proper name. (b8)

Prophet

Jesus is at times referred to as prophet, and yet, this is only an incomplete title of Him, if viewed as separated from all His other designations. As such, in the Gospel of Luke we come across this title. As Jesus announces the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy (Isaiah 61:1-2) in

Luke 4:16-30 while in the synagogue of His hometown (Nazareth), we see in v.24 that He is more than a prophet since He proclaims salvation through Himself. (b9)

Also, in Luke 4:25-27 Jesus points to the Old Testament prophet Elijah (1 Kings 17-18) and Elisha (2 Kings 5:1-14) when the Israelites at the time missed God's blessings as a result of unbelief, and so there is a parallel here, since Jesus is warning the people He is preaching to, not to miss Him (that is Jesus Christ) - failing to recognize and believe in Him as Messiah (since He is more than a prophet) as a stern warning not to come under God's eternal judgment. (b10)

Servant

While not explicitly mentioned as a proper title in the Gospels, but rather only alluded to, it becomes clear that, the mission of Jesus is part of the work of a divine 'Servant,' as can be seen at His baptism (Luke 3:22), His transfiguration (Luke 9:35) and especially as He declares to 'set the captives free' (Luke 4:16-19). (b11)

More precisely, Jesus' role as 'suffering servant' becomes clear in the Gospel of Mark (Mark 10:45; 14:24) where Jesus speaks of shedding His blood for many, which echoes Isaiah 53:11 in the Old Testament, making clear that Jesus is the suffering Messiah, who dies for the many (that is, all who will ever believe in Him). (b12)

Son of Man

This title is one of the most favorite self-descriptions of Jesus Himself in the Gospels, thereby underlining His messianic identity, without using the term 'Messiah' for Himself to avoid political upheaval prior to accomplishing His work on the cross, but still maintaining His divine origin and human side. (b13)

This title appears *outside* of the Gospels, only in Acts 7:56, as Stephen is crying out to Jesus: The link between 'Son of Man' and the Old Testament, goes back to Daniel 7:13 which also refers to a 'Son of Man,' so that both Christ's suffering on the cross and His future return (at His 'Second Coming' in Revelation 1:13-18) in which He consummates His eternal kingdom, serve as stern warning that He also issues at His trial before the Sanhedrin (Matthew 26:64). (b14)

Son of God

This title is never used by Jesus Himself (but is frequent in the Epistles as it relates to His pre-existence), whereas in the Gospel the title emphasizes Jesus' divine authority over the spiritual realm (Mark 3:11; 5:7). (b15) Following Jesus' baptism, it is Satan and demons who recognize and affirm Jesus by using this title (Matthew 4:3, 6; 8:29), Peter confesses Jesus as "Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16) and even a Roman centurion cries out at the death of Jesus: "Surely he was the Son of God" (Matthew 27:54). (b16)

The link here is to the covenants God makes in the Old Testament, echoing the Davidic covenant, where God relates to King David like a Father to His son in a loving relationship (2 Samuel 7:14-15; 1 Chronicles 17:13-14; 22:10; 28:6-7) - also relating to Psalm 89 in which God's eternal love is expressed - so, this title identifies Jesus as the One through whom God makes and fulfills His eternal covenantal promise to David. (b17) Jesus uses this exact Old Testament framework to challenge the unbelieving Pharisees, thereby dumbfounding them:

> While the Pharisees were assembled, Jesus questioned them: ***"What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is He?"*** "David's," they answered. Jesus said to them, ***"How then does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord'? For he says: 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand until I put Your enemies under Your feet." ' So if David calls Him 'Lord,' how can He be David's son?"*** No one was able to answer a word, and from that day on no one dared to question Him any further.
>
> Matthew 22:41–46 (BSB)

Son of David

Related to the title 'Son of God' is the title 'Son of David,' which is one of the most important titles in the New Testament, since Jesus Christ is the One who inherits the kingdom of David as Messiah (the Christ). (b18) In the Gospel of Matthew we can especially see the emphasis of Christ's royal messianic designation, as 'Son of David' where Matthew uses the title in the context of Jesus' humility (Matthew 21:1-11) and His compassion as He heals people (Matthew 9:27; 12:22-23; 15:22; 20:30-31; 21:14-15) and so, unlike an earthly king who conquers, Jesus reveals Himself as Messiah by showing self-sacrificial love, mercy and compassion. (b19)

As the New Testament unfolds, we also see the connection to King David in the book of Acts, where the promise of God's divine plan is revealed from David's lineage (Acts 13:22-23) and, even more profoundly, in Peter's

declaration (Acts 2:25-31) that David prophesied about this divine sonship in anticipation of his son's resurrection (Psalm 16:8-11): As such the title "Son of David" establishes an important connection pointing to God having fulfilled His promise in Jesus. (b20)

Lord

When Jesus had washed their feet and put on His outer garments, He reclined with them again and asked, ***"Do you know what I have done for you? You call Me Teacher and Lord, and rightly so, because I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example so that you should do as I have done for you."***
John 13:12–15 (BSB)

This title occurs throughout the Gospels as it refers to Jesus Christ. In our Bibles we find the word 'Lord' and 'LORD' (all upper case letters) in English Bible translations. Both uses go back to the Old Testament. As such, the former ('Lord') (which means 'Sovereign,' derived from Hebrew 'Adonai') is a descriptive way of referring to God's divine supremacy, whereas the latter ('LORD') is the proper personal name of 'Yahweh' (God) which emphasizes the developing personal relationship between God and His people. (b21)

In this Old Testament context we see that the use of 'LORD' is a way of revealing God's holiness, which we find in Isaiah as He some into the presence of Almighty God (Isaiah 6:4-5), and it is only here in the Old Testament that God's holiness is emphasized in a threefold expression, "Holy, holy, holy…," (v.3) pointing to the absolute divine holiness of God in which all sinners are exposed and condemned. (b22)

So, going back to the opening verses above (John 13:12-15), Jesus affirms the title 'Lord' as being correct (v.13), thereby placing His disciples in a position, where Jesus is their master, and they (and all of us believers are His servants) - "Lord" (Greek *kurios*) here being used as a title of respect. As such, Jesus uses this title to affirm His divine uniqueness as 'God in the Flesh' (Mark 12:35-37) and by quoting Psalm 110:1 - simultaneously linking both 'Adonai' and 'Yahweh' to Himself, thereby affirming His status as Messiah. (b23)

Messiah

This brings us to the title ‘Messiah’ as recorded in the Bible. In the Old Testament, the translation of “Messiah” (meaning ‘Anointed One’) occurs only in Daniel 9:25-26 which points to divine kingship. (b24) In the New Testament Gospels, Jesus Himself never directly uses this description for Himself, only when challenged by the Sanhedrin at His ‘trial’ does Jesus affirm this attestation (Mark 14:61-62). (b25) As such, Jesus’ ministry and the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies signify that the kingdom of God has arrived in and through Jesus Christ as Messiah (‘King’). (b26) More common though in the New Testament than the term ‘Messiah’ is the name Christos (‘Messiah’), often used by the Apostle Paul, who refers to Him also as Christ Jesus.

Other Titles

There are many other titles of Jesus Christ as we find them in the Bible. Jesus is called “Great” (Luke 1:32) which is used to refer to God, when it is used in the Old Testament by itself (Psalm 48:1; 95:3). (b27) In Luke 1:35 Jesus is referred to as “holy” which means that God has set Him apart for divine mission. (b28) Jesus is “King” born to be “King of the Jews” (Matthew 2:2) and later arrives humbly riding on a donkey’s colt at His triumphant entry into Jerusalem (Matthew 21:5) and He will be the kingly judge at His Second Coming (Matthew 25:34, 40). (b29)

Along with the angelic announcement that Jesus is the promised heir to King David’s throne (referred to as “the Son of the Most High” in Luke 1:32) (b30), it is also fallen angels (demons) who correctly recognize and confess Jesus as “the Holy One of God” (Luke 4:34). (b31) Among the first human witnesses of Christ’s divinity is John the Baptist, who refers to Jesus as “the Lamb of God” (John 1:29) which reveals Jesus’ divine name and His mission of becoming the last and final sacrifice (replacing the Old Testament Passover lamb) as sin bearer for all believers. (b32)

In addition, Jesus is also referred to as “Teacher” that is as divine instructor (a Jewish rabbi), most often used by the Pharisees and Scribes. (b33) The Apostle John refers to Jesus as “Word” (Greek: *logos*) and “light” (John 1:1-14) expressing the eternality of Christ. Jesus as God’s Son is also “Immanuel” (‘God with us’) in Matthew 1:23 which also emphasizes His permanent presence with believers (Matthew 28:20). (b34)

Also, Jesus refers to Himself frequently as “I AM” (Greek: *ego eimi*) throughout the Gospel of John (John 6:35; 8:12; 10:7; 10:11; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1) which is a direct reference to the Old Testament in which God revealed Himself to Moses (Exodus 3:6) as “I AM,” which places Jesus in the position of Yahweh, affirmed by Christ’s resurrection. (b35)

Finally, Jesus is titled as “Savior” (Luke 1:42; Luke 2:11) - the former verse being human testimony (by Mary), the latter being angelic testimony (by angels to shepherds), which shows that Christ is uniquely connected to God and fulfills His mission as Savior. (b36)

Conclusion

In sum, we see that the names and titles for Jesus Christ are not just names, but carry with them specific meanings and divine truth. We find that His name Jesus Christ is more commonly used outside of the Gospels, so the name ‘Christ’ provides the foundation for the Christian faith, since in His earthly ministry, death and resurrection Jesus fulfilled Old Testament prophecies. (b37)

In addition, to titles that show Jesus as Prophet and Savior (again fulfilling Old Testament prophecy) Jesus most popular self-attestation is by using the title “Son of Man.” This title reveals that Jesus is truly human (and simultaneously divine), showing His messianic authority and glory and reveals His role as suffering servant. (b38)

Furthermore, the title “Son of God” shows Him as God’s true son (affirmed by God Himself at Christ’s baptism and transfiguration in Mark 1:11 and 9:7) revealing Jesus’ unique relationship with God and sharing God’s identity. (b39)

“Son of David” is used for Jesus as a title primarily by people calling out to Him, affirming His status as divine heir to king David’s throne (Matthew 21:9) which parallels His messianic actions, as He clears the temple (Matthew 21:12-16) challenging the authority of the religious leaders. This challenge then extends directly to the Pharisees and Scribes, as Jesus refers to the title ‘Lord’ in asking them a question they cannot answer (Mark 12:35-37) - another indication that Jesus is indeed ‘Lord’ and ‘LORD’ (that is Yahweh) God Himself. (b41)

Lastly, while ‘Messiah’ is not a title Jesus uses for Himself, the sum of all other titles, especially Jesus’ “I AM’” statements reveal His divine identity and mission as Savior, pointing to Christ as logos (the divine Word) the creator of the universe (b42) which is our warning as mankind to respond to God’s call to repentance:

> Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, existing in the form of God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form

of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross. Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name above all names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:5–11 (BSB)

Appendix A
Names and Titles of Christ*

TITLES OF CHRIST

The most common ways of Christians to refer to Jesus Christ is *Jesus* and *Christ*. Here are some names and titles referring to Jesus as they appear in the New Testament. Every title reveals a specific truth about Jesus in His relationship with believers.

Name or Title	Significance	Biblical Reference
Adam, Last Adam	First of the new redeemed people	1 Cor. 15:45
Alpha and Omega	The beginning and ending of everything	Rev. 21:6
Bread of Life	The one vital food	John 6:35
Chief Cornerstone	A certain foundation for life	Eph. 2:20
Chief Shepherd	Protector, sustainer, and leader	1 Pet. 5:4
Firstborn from the Dead	Leading to resurrection and life eternal	Col. 1:18
Good Shepherd	Provider and caretaker	John 10:11
Great Shepherd of the Sheep	Faithful guide and protector	Heb. 13:20
High Priest	The final and faultless sacrifice for our sins	Heb. 3:1
Holy One of God	Jesus is sinless in His nature	Mark 1:24
Immanuel (God With Us)	Jesus is with us in all circumstances of life	Matt. 1:23
King of Kings, Lord of Lords	Jesus is Almighty God, before whom all will bow	Rev.19:16
Lamb of God	Jesus sacrifices His life on behalf of all believers	John 1:29
Light of the World	Jesus offers hope in midst of darkness	John 9:5
Lord of Glory	Jesus is supreme and the presence of the living God	1 Cor. 2:8
Mediator between God and Men	Jesus carries us into God’s presence, since He redeems and forgives us	1 Tim. 2:5
Only Begotten of the Father	The matchless, one-of-a-kind Son of God	John 1:14

Prophet	Jesus faithfully proclaims God’s truths	Acts 3:22
Savior	Jesus is our Deliverer from sin and death	Luke 1:47
Seed of Abraham	Jesus is the Mediator of God’s covenant	Gal. 3:16
Son of Man	Jesus Identifies with us as human beings	Matt. 18:11
The Word	At the creation, Jesus is present with God	John 1:1

*Adapted from *Nelson's Complete Book Of Bible Maps And Charts*, 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010., p.338.

Notes

(b1) *Nelson's Complete Book Of Bible Maps And Charts*, 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010., p.338.

(b2) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.419-420.
(b3) See Appendix A for a selection of names and titles of Christ that reveal their significance about Jesus and what they mean for believers.
(b4) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.321.
(b5) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.102.
(b6) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009., p.477.
(b7) Bock, Darrell L. *A Theology of Luke and Acts: God's Promised Program, Realized for All*
Nations. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2012., p.185-187.
(b8)) Bartholomew, Craig G., Daniel J. Treier, Kevin Jon Vanhoozer, and Nicholas Thomas Wright. *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005., p. 364.
(b9) Bock, Darrell L. *A Theology of Luke and Acts: God's Promised Program, Realized for All*
Nations. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2012., p.189.
(b10) Bock, Darrell L. *A Theology of Luke and Acts: God's Promised Program, Realized for All*
Nations. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2012., p.189-193.
(b11) Bock, Darrell L. *A Theology of Luke and Acts: God's Promised Program, Realized for All*
Nations. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2012., p.198.
(b12) Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020., p.241-242.
(b13) Bartholomew, Craig G., Daniel J. Treier, Kevin Jon Vanhoozer, and Nicholas Thomas Wright. *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005., p.364.
(b14) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009., p.470-472.
(b15) Bartholomew, Craig G., Daniel J. Treier, Kevin Jon Vanhoozer, and Nicholas Thomas Wright. *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005., p.364.
(b16) Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020., p.292.
(b17) Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008., p.234-236.
(b18) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.102.

(b19) Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020., p.290.
(b20) Bock, Darrell L. *A Theology of Luke and Acts: God's Promised Program, Realized for All Nations*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2012., p.187.
(b21) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.413.
(b22) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.419.
(b23) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009., p.474-475.
(b24) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009., p.476.
(b25) Bartholomew, Craig G., Daniel J. Treier, Kevin Jon Vanhoozer, and Nicholas Thomas Wright. *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005., p.364.
(b26) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009., p.469.
(b27) Bock, Darrell L. *A Theology of Luke and Acts: God's Promised Program, Realized for All Nations*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2012., p.150.
(b28) Bock, Darrell L. *A Theology of Luke and Acts: God's Promised Program, Realized for All Nations*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2012., p.151.
(b29) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009., p.477-478.
(b30) Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008., p.237.
(b31) Bock, Darrell L. *A Theology of Luke and Acts: God's Promised Program, Realized for All Nations*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2012., p.200.
(b32) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.417.
(b33) Bock, Darrell L. *A Theology of Luke and Acts: God's Promised Program, Realized for All Nations*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2012., p.200.
(b34) Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008., p.238.
(b35) Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008., p.248.
(b36) Bock, Darrell L. *A Theology of Luke and Acts: God's Promised Program, Realized for All Nations*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2012., p.159.

(b37) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.103.
(b38) Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020., p.241.
(b39) Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008., p.237.
(b40) Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020., p.281.
(b41) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.417.
(b42) Bartholomew, Craig G., Daniel J. Treier, Kevin Jon Vanhoozer, and Nicholas Thomas Wright. *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005., p.364.

Bibliography

Bartholomew, Craig G., Daniel J. Treier, Kevin Jon Vanhoozer, and Nicholas Thomas Wright. *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005.

Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009.

Bock, Darrell L. *A Theology of Luke and Acts: God's Promised Program, Realized for All Nations*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2012.

Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995.

Nelson's Complete Book Of Bible Maps And Charts, 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010.

Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008.

Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020.

The Major Teachings of Jesus Christ

Introduction

As Jesus is here on earth, one of the most important aspects of His ministry is that of teaching. The Bible records Christ's teaching in all four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) and His words comprise over half of the entire Gospel texts - it is in the Gospel of Matthew that we find most of Jesus' major teachings (the Sermon on the Mount which begins with the 'Beatitudes' in Matthew 5-7 and the Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24-25). (c1) Other major teachings can be found in His discussion with individuals (such as Nicodemus in John 3, the Samaritan Woman in John 4) and groups (such as in John 6:22-59; John 7-8; John 10:1-18 and the Upper Room Discourse with His disciples in John 13-16) among other encounters with individuals and groups.

While often facing opposition by the religious leaders of His time, as well as unbelieving people, Jesus address about every conceivable area of life, at times using His teaching as a way of interpreting His miracles, so Jesus teaches in word and deed. (c2) Jesus' teaching is built on the Old Testament in that He talks about God's love and righteousness, His redemptive acts, His judgments and the covenants He makes with people: hereby, Jesus emphasizes His own unique divine identity, as He forgives sins, stating that He Himself will be the eternal judge of every person's eternal destiny (spending eternity with Jesus in Heaven and sternly warning about hell), His ultimate authority is expressed with *amen* (translated as "truly" or "verily"). (c3)

The following provides a brief overview of different areas of Jesus' teachings, that is about the kingdom of God, God the Father, the Holy Spirit, Prayer, Scripture (the Bible), Life, Himself and about His Second Coming.

About the Kingdom of God

Then a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute was brought to Jesus, and He healed the man so that he could speak and see. The crowds were astounded and asked, “Could this be the Son of David?” But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, “Only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, does this man drive out demons.” Knowing their thoughts, Jesus said to them, ***“Every kingdom divided against itself will be laid waste, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand. If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand? And if I drive out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.”***
Matthew 12:22–28 (BSB)

In the Gospels Jesus refers to the “Kingdom of God,” as well as the “Kingdom of Heaven” - which are synonymous - but only in Matthew do we find the latter usage (see Mark 10:14 and Matthew 19:14). (c4)

Jesus teaches that His Father’s Kingdom has arrived, in that Jesus arrival on the scene is a manifestation of it (e.g., Matthew 4:7; 2:28; 21:31; Mark 1:14-15; Luke 11:20; 17:20-21) and is also a finite reality to be fulfilled at Christ’s Second Coming (Matthew 25:34; Luke 11:2; 22:18). (c5) What this means is that Jesus actually rules in the lives of the people He encounters, such as blessing them, delivering them from oppression and exercising authority over them (Luke 17:21; 18:24). (c6)

As Jesus’ ministry unfolds, there are two responses to His teaching (and miracles) - one is belief, the other is unbelief: only some were able to see God’s revealed kingdom in and through Jesus Christ, which is one of the reasons He teaches in parables about the Kingdom of God (Mark 4:10-12). (c7) Christ’s teaching about God’s Kingdom also extends to His works (His miracles), as He casts out demons and reveals His divine authority as He forgives sins (Luke 7:48-8:1; 6:20, 24-26 etc.). (c8)

For us as believers, as we read Jesus’ teachings about the Kingdom of God, we realize that it is Christ who is producing fruit in our Christian life and walk of faith with Him, since He is the vine and we are the branches (John 15:1-7). (c9)

About God the Father

Philip said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us.” Jesus replied, ***“Philip, I have been with you all this time, and still you do not know Me? Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? The words I say to you, I do not speak on My own. Instead, it is the Father dwelling in Me, performing His works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me—or at least believe on account of the works themselves.”***
John 14:8–11 (BSB)

Closely linked to Jesus’ teaching about the Kingdom of God is His teaching about God the Father. Jesus teaches that the Father God created the world (Mark 13:19), providentially sustains and cares for it (Matthew 10:29), has a sovereign will that must be adhered to (Matthew 26:39), and who alone knows and has set the day when Christ returns (Matthew 24:36). (c10)

Jesus uses the Aramaic word ‘abba’ (“Father”) which is like a child-like way of calling out ‘Daddy’ or ‘Dadda’ (Mark 14:36 also found in Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:6). Jesus struggles in the garden of Gethsemane, pleading with God the Father to remove the “cup of suffering,” not having to go to the cross - it is here that we see Christ’s special divine sonship, showing His unique relationship with the Father (who does Himself speak audibly at times, at Christ’s baptism and transfiguration, for example). (c11)

Here, Jesus sets an example for all His followers, who are called into a personal relationship with God, as Jesus teaches in the Lord’s Prayer (Matthew 6:9) and knowing God the Father through a relationship with Christ Himself (John 14:6-7). (c12) Jesus cares about all His children, and gives comfort and strength in the lives of every individual believer (John 20:17) and provides for us (Matthew 6:31-34). (c13)

About the Holy Spirit

“And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate to be with you forever— the Spirit of truth. The world cannot receive Him, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. But you do know Him, for He abides with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. In a little while the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you also will live.”
John 14:16–19 (BSB)

Jesus also teaches about the Holy Spirit. Prior and during His ministry, the Gospels reveal the work of the Holy Spirit, since Christ is conceived by the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:15), publicly affirmed as God's Son by the Holy Spirit at His baptism (Luke 3:22), led by the Holy Spirit to be tempted by the devil in the desert (Luke 4:1), preaching the good news in the power of the Spirit (Luke 4:18) and enables Jesus to cast out demons (Matthew 12:28). (c14)

Christ's major teaching about the Holy Spirit can be found in the 'Upper Room Discourse' following the Last Supper in John 14-16, where Jesus is preparing His disciples for His own departure to heaven and the arrival of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2). Interspersed through the verses in John 14-16, Jesus teaches the disciples (and us as believers) important truths about the ministry of the Holy Spirit. (c15)

Throughout the Gospels Jesus reveals more about the Holy Spirit, as He uniquely promises Judgment, for those blaspheming against the Holy Spirit (Matthew 12:22-32; Mark 3:22-30; Luke 11:14-23) - the unpardonable sin - which cannot be committed again: by contrast, for believers, Jesus teaches that the Holy Spirit regenerates us (John 3:5), helps us to worship God in spirit and in truth (John 4:24), inspires Scripture (Mark 12:36), enables believers to boldly speak for the Christian faith (Matthew 10:19-20), and also is God's gift that after Jesus' glorification, Christians would personally receive the Holy Spirit. (c16)

About Prayer

"So then, this is how you should pray: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.'"
Matthew 6:9–13 (BSB)

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus teaches about the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) which provides the essence of God's truth and work in the life of believers (note that church tradition adds after v.13, "For Yours is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen"). As Christians, Jesus teaches us to pray 'your Kingdom come' (v.10) which is an expression of our hope and joy to see Christ returning as King, revealed in His full glory at His Second Coming, when He does away with all sin and evil forever. (c17)

When Jesus instructs us to pray “Your will be done” (v.10), as believers we are called to seek God’s will with obedient and repentant hearts, thereby following all the instructions as the prayer continues (and what other parts of the Bible teach about prayer), including the confession of sin (see 1 John 1:9), forgiving others, being humble, continue to pray over time (also see Luke 11:9-10; 18:6-8), praying earnestly (see Hebrews 5:7), waiting on the Lord (Psalm 27:14), praying in private (Luke 5:16; Matthew 6:6), praying with other believers (Matthew 18:19-20) and understanding that some of our prayers will remain unanswered this side of heaven. (c18)

What matters most here is that Jesus Christ is *actively* praying for all Christians, since He intercedes for us before God the Father, has given us His spoken word (Luke 22:32; John 17:6-26) and continually restores us to fellowship with Him as we confess of our sins and repent before Him through the empowering work of the Holy Spirit. (c19) In Jesus’ so-called ‘High-priestly prayer’ (John 17) we see Him praying for His disciples and us as believers today, thus showing us how much He cares about us and loves us. (c20)

About Scripture

Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had described. But Him they did not see.” Then Jesus said to them, ***“O foolish ones, how slow are your hearts to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and then to enter His glory?”*** And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He explained to them what was written in all the Scriptures about Himself. As they approached the village where they were headed, He seemed to be going farther. But they pleaded with Him, “Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over.” So He went in to stay with them. While He was reclining at the table with them, He took bread, spoke a blessing and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Jesus—and He disappeared from their sight. They asked each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us as He

spoke with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?” And they got up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, gathered together and saying, “The Lord has indeed risen and has appeared to Simon!”
Luke 24:24–34 (BSB)

Jesus also teaches about Scripture (the Bible). This is revealed in many places which record Jesus’ earthly ministry and, notably, as seen in the above passage after His resurrection, we have the first ‘Bible Study’ conducted by our risen Lord.

Prior to His crucifixion, Jesus teaches about the Old Testament Scriptures, at times to reveal the false teaching and wrong application of Scripture by the religious leaders, here in John 5:39-40. (c21) Jesus also reads the Scriptures, for example, in His hometown of Nazareth (Luke 4:16-21) to teach about Himself, that in Him as Messiah, Old Testament prophecy is fulfilled.

Jesus continues to expose religious falsehood in His teachings on Scripture as He faces His opponents in John 10:34, where he quotes Psalm 82:6 to instruct and correct His adversaries, and simultaneously reveals His divine humility and authority as He addresses the unbelief and Scriptural abuse of the Sadducees (Matthew 22:23-33; Mark 12:18-27; Luke 20:27-40). (c22)

Jesus is Himself referred to as the Word (John 1:1-5) and in that way His teaching reflects His own divine identity, time and time again in the Gospels, especially as He points this out:

> ***“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will never pass away.”***
> Matthew 24:35 (BSB)

His divine identity and authority by means of the Bible is also expressed by the Apostle Paul:

> All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for instruction, for conviction, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work.
> 2 Timothy 3:16–17 (BSB)

About Life

Jesus declared, ***“ ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”***
Matthew 22:37–40 (BSB)

Jesus teaches about life here on earth and eternal life in many passages of the Gospels. Many life lessons can be found in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) with the Beatitudes and in other parts where Jesus teaches in parables about God’s grace, mercy and love, the requirement to repent of sins, to forgive and to love (that is God and one’s neighbor), as we see in the opening verses above, called the ‘Great Commandment.’ Hereby, Jesus summarizes the Old Testament Ten Commandments (Deuteronomy 5:5-21) and groups the first four of the Old Testament into the first part of the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:37-38), followed by grouping the last six of the Old Testament into the second part of the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:39). This major teaching of Jesus’ is then completed by the so-called ‘Golden Rule’:

> ***“In everything, then, do to others as you would have them do to you. For this is the essence of the Law and the Prophets.”***
> Matthew 7:12 (BSB)

This helps us understand what Jesus means by “loving,” so that we have a solid foundation here for godly and righteous living. (c23)

Jesus’ teaching about life is also expressed in many parables He uses, which comprise of approximately a third of His teachings - whereby He often uses stories from everyday life to convey spiritual truths, in order to get the attention of those listening. (c24) His parables sometimes have one main teaching point, at other times more than one, and especially in His longer parabolic lessons can we find an element of allegory. (c25)

In His teaching about life Jesus covers about every aspect conceivable: mercy, grace, compassion, love, forgiveness and more. The story of the woman caught in adultery (*Pericope Adulterae* in John 7:53-8:11) is not part of inspired Scripture (similar to Mark 16:9-20), since it is not contained in the

earliest New Testament manuscripts. (c26) Significantly, in all His teachings, Jesus never quotes other teachers (such as from the rabbinic tradition) which emphasizes His own unique divine authority. (c27)

About Himself

Jesus said to them, ***“These are the words I spoke to you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about Me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms.”*** Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. And He told them, ***“This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and in His name repentance and forgiveness of sins will be proclaimed to all nations, beginning in Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending the promise of My Father upon you. But remain in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”***
Luke 24:44–49 (BSB)

After Christ’s resurrection, following His appearance to two disciples on the Road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-34) Jesus appears again to His eleven disciples, along with the two Emmaus travelers. We have this event recorded in the above passage, and see here the care aspects of Jesus teaching about Himself: His identity (as Messiah in v.46), why He had to suffer and die (v.46), the necessity of repentance for salvation (v.47) as well as the meaning and purpose of His resurrection (v.45-49).

Jesus reveals His identity, as He teaches about His own suffering and death, which is a fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy (Isaiah 52:13-53:12). (c28) The resurrection itself is an authentication of Christ’s claims to messiahship, and is the reason the Gospels provide a lot of details about Jesus’s words and teachings. (c29)

Jesus also explains why He had to die. One reason is that in His life and death, Jesus fulfilled all predictions He Himself had made. (c30) Another reason is that through His death, Christ has reconciled all believers to Himself, so we are in union with Christ by faith in Him (Romans 5:12-21), since His atonement by means of the cross, gives all Christians right standing before God, due to the fact that we are no longer under God’s wrath. (c31) Lastly, Christ’s death and resurrection has made way for the release of the promised Holy Spirit (Luke 24:49) which indwells the heart of every believer, forever.

Repentance, then, as Jesus explains (Luke 24:47) opens the way to God's eternal Kingdom, for all who acknowledge Christ as their Lord and Savior. (c32)

Salvation, is now available, as Jesus teaches, to all believers, be they Jew or Gentile (Luke 13:22-30). (c33)

Lastly, as Jesus teaches about the resurrection (Luke 24:46), which He revealed at the revivification of Lazarus (John 11) who had been dead for four days, is a corroboration of Christ's verified claim to be the "resurrection and the life" (John 11:25). (c34)

About His Second Coming

"Be dressed for service and keep your lamps burning. Then you will be like servants waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks, they can open the door for him at once. Blessed are those servants whom the master finds on watch when he returns. Truly I tell you, he will dress himself to serve and will have them recline at the table, and he himself will come and wait on them. Even if he comes in the second or third watch of the night and finds them alert, those servants will be blessed."

Luke 12:35–38 (BSB)

Lastly, Jesus teaches about His last and final return, at His Second Coming. We see this well-expressed in the above passage, as Jesus admonishes all believers to be prepared for that unpredictable and glorious event of Christ's return (v.37-38).

It is primarily in the so-called 'Olivet Discourse' that Jesus teaches about the imminent events at this time, such as the destruction of the Jerusalem temple (which took place in AD 70) that He talks about His Second Coming. Similar to the opening passage above, Jesus teaches about His own return at the end of time (Matthew 24:30-31) which is a stern warning for all Christians to be prepared and alert. (c35)

In this context, Jesus self-reference as "Son of Man" - which relates to God's prophecy in the Old Testament (Daniel 7:13) - is mentioned at Christ's

trial (Luke 22:69) as Jesus even there teaches and preaches the Gospel. (c36) As believers, we should be aware that Jesus is preparing a heavenly home for us (John 14:1-3) just as He reminded and tried to reach those even at the Sanhedrin at the time, that there is plenty of room for everyone in heaven, since all things will be ultimately restored under Jesus Christ as Messiah. (c37)

Conclusion

To sum up, we see that in Jesus' major teaching He reveals to us everything we need to know about how to live a godly life, that honors God, since we are now better able to understand and follow our Lord, since He has revealed Himself in and through the person of Jesus Christ, the Messiah.

In His approximately three and a half years of ministry on earth, Jesus' teachings about the Kingdom of God emphasizes that it is those who follow Christ to the end, who will enter and receive God's blessings there. (c38) God, the Father is the personal God, who cares for all His children and provides for them.

Likewise, Jesus' teaching about the Holy Spirit reveals, that we are not alone in our walk of faith, since the Spirit of Christ seals all Christians as "first fruits" (Romans 8:23) and is our "guarantor" of the fullness of eternal life, both now and forever (2 Corinthians 1:22; 5:5; *Ephesians 1:14*). (c39)

Also, prayer is an important part of the Christian life, as Jesus teaches and exemplifies Himself, so that God may bring a Bible passage to mind as we pray, and may change the desires of our hearts, giving us a sense of assurance, as He helps us to pray more (Philippians 4:6-7). (c40)

Since Jesus is "the Word" (John 1:1) His instructions and teachings about the Bible help us to draw us closer to Him, as we read and study it (Joshua 1:8-9), reminding us that only by staying in His word daily, will He reveal Himself to us in the way He deems best.

In addition, Jesus our Lord and Teacher, helps us navigate all aspects of life, seen in His teachings in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), His parables and the lessons He draws from based on the miracles He performs. As believers we do well to heed His *Great Commandment* (Matthew 22:37-40) which helps us in our daily life, to develop and grow in our personal relationship with Christ.

Furthermore, Jesus reveals His identity to us (as He is ‘God in the Flesh’) by teaching us about Himself. His teaching, miracles and deeds - authenticated by His resurrection - are ultimate proof that He is indeed the Messiah: so, Christ’s works are decisive to verify His divine claims. (c42) Jesus also tells us why He had to die. He atoned for our sins on the cross as part of His substitutionary work, accomplishing salvation (by propitiation, redemption, justification, reconciliation as well as union with Jesus Christ). (c43)

As Jesus explains further; His teachings, repentance and faith in Him are the foundation for salvation. (c44) Through Christ’s suffering, death and resurrection the Messianic age has now arrived, and God has revealed Himself as Redeemer and Savior, in and through Jesus Christ. (c45) Christ’s teaching about Himself culminates in rising bodily from the dead Himself (Romans 8:11, 29; Colossians 1:18) carrying with it a stern warning to all those who reject Christ, who will suffer eternally in hell. (c46)

Lastly, as we await Christ’s return at His Second Coming on Judgment Day, we must not forget that Jesus Himself is looking forward in His teaching, warning us about this last and final event in human history, when the full and sovereign authority of God over all mankind will be revealed. (c47) In the meantime, Christ is actively building His church, as head of the church (that is all believers) (1 Corinthians 12:13), nurturing it, directing it, cleansing it - manifested in the sanctification of every believer (Ephesians 5:25-27). Hence, as Christians, we are securely sealed for the day of redemption, as we place our faith in Jesus Christ:

> And in Him, having heard and believed the word of truth—the gospel of your salvation—you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the pledge of our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession, to the praise of His glory.
>
> Ephesians 1:13–14 (BSB)

Notes

(c1) Enns, Paul P. *The Moody Handbook of Theology: Revised and Expanded*. Chicago, IL:
Moody Publishers, 2014., p.243.
(c2) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.235.
(c3) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.141-142.
(c4) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.142-143.
(c5) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.328.
(c6) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.143.
(c7) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.328.
(c8) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.329.
(c9) Enns, Paul P. *The Moody Handbook of Theology: Revised and Expanded*. Chicago, IL:
Moody Publishers, 2014., p.253.
(c10) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.327.

(c11) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.142.
(c12) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.327.
(c13) *Nelson's Complete Book Of Bible Maps And Charts*, 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010., p.327.
(c14) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.329.
(c15) Enns, Paul P. *The Moody Handbook of Theology: Revised and Expanded*. Chicago, IL:
Moody Publishers, 2014., p.243.
(c16) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.329.
(c17) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.329.
(c18) Grudem, Wayne A. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand
Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000., p.382-392.
(c19) Enns, Paul P. *The Moody Handbook of Theology: Revised and Expanded*. Chicago, IL:
Moody Publishers, 2014., p.253.
(c20) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.325.
(c21) Bartholomew, Craig G., Daniel J. Treier, Kevin Jon Vanhoozer, and Nicholas Thomas Wright. *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005., p. 359.
(c22) Bartholomew, Craig G., Daniel J. Treier, Kevin Jon Vanhoozer, and Nicholas Thomas Wright. *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005., p.361.
(c23) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.142.
(c24) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.330.
(c25) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.141.
(c26) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.307.
(c27) Enns, Paul P. *The Moody Handbook of Theology: Revised and Expanded*. Chicago, IL:
Moody Publishers, 2014., p.243.

(c28) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.142.
(c29) Enns, Paul P. *The Moody Handbook of Theology: Revised and Expanded*. Chicago, IL:
Moody Publishers, 2014., p.242.
(c30) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.176.
(c31) Groothuis, Douglas R. *Christian Apologetics: A comprehensive Case for Biblical Faith*. [2nd ed.]. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2022., p.529-530.
(c32) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.328.
(c33) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.263.
(c34) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009., p.351.
(c35) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.176.
(c36) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.327.
(c37) Enns, Paul P. *The Moody Handbook of Theology: Revised and Expanded*. Chicago, IL:
Moody Publishers, 2014., p.253.
(c38) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.327.
(c39) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011., p.433.
(c40) Grudem, Wayne A. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand
Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000., p.384.
(c41) Bartholomew, Craig G., Daniel J. Treier, Kevin Jon Vanhoozer, and Nicholas Thomas Wright. *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005., p.363.
(c42) Enns, Paul P. *The Moody Handbook of Theology: Revised and Expanded*. Chicago, IL:
Moody Publishers, 2014., p.243.
(c43) Groothuis, Douglas R. *Christian Apologetics: A comprehensive Case for Biblical Faith*. [2nd ed.]. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2022., p.531.
(c44) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.144.
(c45) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.329.

(c46) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011., p.433.
(c47) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.328.
(c48) Enns, Paul P. *The Moody Handbook of Theology: Revised and Expanded*. Chicago, IL:
Moody Publishers, 2014., p.252.

Bibliography

Bartholomew, Craig G., Daniel J. Treier, Kevin Jon Vanhoozer, and Nicholas Thomas Wright. *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005.

Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009.

Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011.

Enns, Paul P. *The Moody Handbook of Theology: Revised and Expanded*. Chicago, IL:
Moody Publishers, 2014.

Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995.

Groothuis, Douglas R. *Christian Apologetics: A comprehensive Case for Biblical Faith*. [2nd ed.]. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2022.

Grudem, Wayne A. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand
Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000.

Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012.

Nelson's Complete Book Of Bible Maps And Charts, 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010.

The Twelve Apostles of Jesus Christ

In those days Jesus went out to the mountain to pray, and He spent the night in prayer to God. When daylight came, He called His disciples to Him and chose twelve of them, whom He also designated as apostles: Simon, whom He named Peter, and his brother Andrew; James and John; Philip and

Bartholomew; Matthew and Thomas; James son of Alphaeus and Simon called the Zealot; Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.
Luke 6:12–16 (BSB)

Introduction

As Jesus Christ is underway doing His ministry, many people show up as they see Him perform miracles and listen to His teachings - often it is huge crowds He encounters. As we see in the above passage, out of a group of His followers (disciples), He selects twelve to be His apostles (messengers). They come from various backgrounds, and it is their common loyalty to Jesus that keeps them together, even though they fail many times, and one of them (Judas Iscariot) even betrays Jesus. (d1)

With many people wanting to follow Him (Matthew 8:18-22), Jesus not only selected the Twelve, but also a larger group (the seventy-two in Luke 10:1-20, which some manuscripts record as 'seventy'). (d2) The twelve, though, are intended to help Jesus during His ministry, and later becoming leaders in the early church, following His ascension - their number likely relates to the Israelite twelve tribes in the Old Testament. (d2)

The following is a brief overview of Jesus calling His first disciples, selecting the twelve apostles and His interaction with them.

Calling His First Disciples

The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. When he saw Jesus walking by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!" And when the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. Jesus turned and saw them following. ***"What do you want?"*** He asked. They said to Him, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are You staying?" ***"Come and see,"*** He replied. So they went and saw where He was staying, and spent that day with Him. It was about the tenth hour. Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard John's testimony and followed Jesus. He first found his brother Simon and told him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated as Christ). Andrew brought him to Jesus, who looked at him and said, ***"You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas"*** (which is translated as Peter). The next day Jesus decided to set out for Galilee. Finding Philip, He told him, ***"Follow Me."*** Now Philip was from Bethsaida,

the same town as Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and told him, “We have found the One Moses wrote about in the Law, the One the prophets foretold—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” “Can anything good come from Nazareth?” Nathanael asked. “Come and see,” said Philip. When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, He said of him, ***“Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is no deceit.”*** “How do You know me?” Nathanael asked. Jesus replied, ***“Before Philip called you, I saw you under the fig tree.”*** “Rabbi,” Nathanael answered, “You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!” Jesus said to him, ***“Do you believe just because I told you I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these.”*** Then He declared, ***“Truly, truly, I tell you, you will all see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.”***
John 1:35–51 (BSB)

In the above passage we learn about Jesus calling His first disciples. These disciples were originally following John the Baptist and his message of repentance, as He prepares the way for the coming of Jesus. So here we see Andrew and Simon Peter being Christ’s first followers, along with Philip and Nathaniel, whom Jesus calls out the next day (John 1:43-51).

At this point, in these brief accounts, we learn only little about these disciples, let alone anything about their forthcoming church leadership, as apostles. (d4) We do know that some of them already had an awareness of the importance of repentance, due to their association with John the Baptist, which is essentially the same message Jesus proclaims (repentance, turning away from a past sinful life and believing the good news - Matthew 3:2; Mark 1:15). (d5)

The calling of the four fishermen brothers (Andrew and Peter, as well as James and John, the sons of Zebedee) is recorded in Mark 1:16-20, as well as the calling of Matthew (Levi), the tax collector, in Mark 2:13-17 (also in Matthew 9:9-13; Luke 5:27-32), establishing this group of followers as distinct from the crowds. (d6)

So here, we are reminded that there is a period of trial and testing, before Jesus selects the Twelve Apostles and the seventy-two, thereafter. Corresponding to the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), Jesus reminds them and us to be salt and light in this dark world, in other words, to have a distinct profile as Christ’s disciples, expressing their repentance, humility, love and compassion in the midst of a hostile world. (d7) As such, the commissioning of the Twelve, is a stage of preparation and training by Christ, culminating in our Lord’s selection of them as apostles.

Selecting the Twelve Apostles

As we saw in the opening passage (Luke 6:12-16), Jesus selects His Twelve Apostles after spending a night in prayer. What is the difference then between a 'disciple' and an 'apostle?' A disciple is basically a follower or learner, whereas an apostle is an individual who is set to carry out a special commission or message. (d9) The disciples ("His disciples" in Luke 6:13) refers to a larger group of people, who had a different purpose than the apostles - a difference that can be seen in their mission, as Jesus sends out the Twelve (Luke 9:1-6) and sending out the seventy-two (Luke 10:1-12, 17-20). (d10)

Why did Jesus select *twelve* apostles? The most likely reason for this is that at the Mosaic Covenant in the Old Testament, twelve tribes constituted God's people, while those twelve are to establish the foundation of God's people as part of the new covenant under Jesus Christ. (d11)

Alongside this theological significance, we also find the authority of the apostles, expressed in the fact that they were eyewitnesses to Jesus' ministry, selected by God to be the authorized messengers of the Gospel (Luke 6:12-13; John 13:18; 15:16, 19; Acts 1:2; 10:41). (d12) Jesus selected the Twelve (John 6:70) to have authority of 'His church' (found also in the three Epistles of John). (d13) Notably, the larger extension of this God-given authority as God's messenger, can be seen in the Apostle Paul, who uses the term in a narrow sense, by special dispensation (1 Corinthians 15:8-10). (d14)

The names of the original Twelve Apostles (d15) can be found at the actual selection (Mark 3:14-19; Luke 6:13-16 and as a mere list in Matthew 10:2-4 and Acts 1:13). What stands out here when comparing these lists of names is that none of the lists are identical, including the lists in Luke-Acts. (d16) All lists begin with Peter and end with Judas Iscariot, except the list in Acts, since Judas had already committed suicide - also, the names appear to be in groups of four (while not always in the same order), with the first group being Peter, Andrew, James and John, and the second group being Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas and Matthew, whereby Peter, Philip and James (son of Alphaeus) head each individual group. (d17)

While not conclusive, there does appear to be a hierarchy among the people listed, but we should not infer anything beyond this. While most Apostles on the list are identifiable, there are some which are not so straightforward. It appears that Simon the Zealot (Luke, Acts) is the same as

Simon the Cananaean (Matthew, Mark) which would make Thaddaeus be Judas son of James. (d18)

Bartholomew is not a personal name but a patronymic (a person identified by their father's name), in this case "son of Tolmai" (d19) and there is no real evidence that Bartholomew is another name for Nathaniel (John 1:45-51; 21:2). (d20)

The actual selection of the Twelve, after Jesus prays all night (Luke 6:12) reveals divine guidance (d21), even though one of them would betray Jesus, which our Lord was aware of (John 6:64) - this is an example of God's sovereignty, in that even in the face of evil, God always accomplishes His divine will for His own eternal good and glory. Following Christ's model, every important decision He makes is preceded by prayer and should be our course of action (as believers) as well. (d22)

Jesus' interaction with the Apostles

In this part, we are looking at Christ's interaction with the Apostles. As the Gospels record, Jesus interacts more with some of them more than with others. Less recorded interaction can be found in Jesus' dealings with Simon the Zealot, of whom we practically know nothing about. Other than the fact that no precise location of the selection of the Twelve is given - of whom the zealot is one - we do know that Christ's approach of seeking out His students is unconventional, since at that time usually students would inquire of and select a teacher. (d23)

Judas (Son of James) has little interaction with Jesus, other than asking a question in John 14:22, besides that, we know nothing about him. The same can be said about Bartholomew (Hebrew "Son of Tolmai"). Subsequently, all we know about James (Son of Alphaeus) is that he is referred to as James 'the less' (Mark 15:40, likely referring to his age, since he is younger than the other James). (d24) The Apostle Matthew is called by Jesus and leaves his toll both, since He is a tax collector, yet immediately responds to Jesus without saying a word (Matthew 9:9-13) - and he then gives a dinner for Jesus with 'his notorious friends and peers,' which shows our Lord's concern for outcasts. (d25) Matthew is likely the author of the Gospel of Matthew.

Thomas (from Hebrew "twin") initially doubts the first resurrection accounts by his peers, but is then persuaded as Jesus reappears again to the others and him (John 20:24-29), prior to that he is fiercely loyal to Jesus, regardless of the cost (John 11:16). (d26) Andrew is the first apostle of the Twelve whom Jesus calls (John 1:40-44), he is the brother of Simon Peter, and

he is a fisherman like Peter, James and John (Matthew 4:18; Mark 1:16) all four who are present at the 'Olivet Discourse' (Mark 13:3), and he serves as a go-between, as Greeks seek an audience with Jesus at the time of Passover (John 12:20-22). (d27)

Not to be confused with Philip the Evangelist in Acts 6 and 8, we know little of the Apostle Philip, other than that he is among the first of Jesus' disciples (John 1) and from Bethsaida in Galilee (as are Andrew and Peter), yet there is one other significant interaction he has with Jesus, as our Lord tests him at the feeding of 5,000 (John 6:5-6) to check the status of his faith, and the other interaction occurs in John 14:8-11, when Philip asks Christ to reveal God the Father, eliciting a profound response. (d28)

The last Apostle - who is not part of the inner circle (Peter, James and John) is Judas Iscariot, of whom we have no background information at all. His interactions with Jesus are bleak, and it is especially in the Gospel of John that we learn about His evil nature and intentions (John 6:70; John 12:1-8; John 13:2) as well as Satan entering Him (John 13:26-27), prompting Jesus to command him (and Satan) to go forth with his betrayer - pre-arranged by Judas Iscariot who conspires with the chief priests (Matthew 26:14-16; Mark 14:10-11; Luke 22:3-6), followed by the Judas' kiss (Matthew 14:43-46) and his subsequent remorse and suicide (Matthew 27:3-5). (d29)

Jesus' inner circle, that is those three Apostles Jesus has the closest relationship with, are Peter, James and John. These three are always present at crucial moments in the life and ministry of Jesus: at the revivification of Jairus' daughter (Mark 5:37-42), at the transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-2; Mark 9:2-13; Luke 9:28-36), at the grief of Jesus in Gethsemane (Matthew 26:30, 36-46; Mark 14:26, 32-42; 22:39-46) and after the resurrection of Christ at the Sea of Galilee (John 21). It is at the transfiguration that these three catch a glimpse of Christ's transcendent glory (d30) - a stage in preparation for our Lord's suffering, death and resurrection.

James and John (sons of Zebedee, the fisherman), are nicknamed "sons of thunder" (Mark 3:17; Mark 9:38-41; Luke 9:54-56) which may be a reference to their temperaments, and we also know that John had a close relationship with the Apostle Peter (Luke 22:8; John 18:15; 20:2-8; Acts 3:1-4:21; 8:14; Galatians 2:9). (d31) Jesus has a special closeness and intimacy with the Apostle John ('the beloved disciple'), since Jesus reveals to Him the identity of the betrayer, Judas Iscariot (John 13:23-25), and puts His mother Mary in John's care at the crucifixion (John 19:25-27). (d32)

The interaction of Jesus with the Apostle Peter extends over many Bible passages in the Gospels and records his personality and leadership. Three selected Bible passages are considered here: Peter's calling (Matthew 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20; Luke 5:1-11), Peter's confession of Christ (Matthew 15:13-20; Mark 8:27-30; Luke 9:18-21) and Peter's restoration (John 21).

On one occasion, while Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret with the crowd pressing in on Him to hear the word of God, He saw two boats at the edge of the lake. The fishermen had left them and were washing their nets. Jesus got into the boat belonging to Simon and asked him to put out a little from shore. And sitting down, He taught the people from the boat. When Jesus had finished speaking, He said to Simon, ***"Put out into deep water and let down your nets for a catch."*** "Master," Simon replied, "we have worked hard all night without catching anything. But because You say so, I will let down the nets." When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to tear. So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees. "Go away from me, Lord," he said, "for I am a sinful man." For he and his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, and so were his partners James and John, the sons of Zebedee. ***"Do not be afraid,"*** Jesus said to Simon. ***"From now on you will catch men."*** And when they had brought their boats ashore, they left everything and followed Him.
Luke 5:1–11 (BSB)

In these verses, we not only encounter Jesus performing an astonishing miracle, but also see His love and compassion, as He calls Peter, along with His first disciples. Peter acknowledges His sinfulness, and he recognizes God's holiness expressed in Jesus, and Jesus responds with love and compassion. (v.10). This is essentially a theophany (a manifestation of God), eliciting a response by Peter to Christ's divine call to service. (d33)

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, He questioned His disciples: ***"Who do people say the Son of Man is?"*** They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." ***"But what about you?"*** Jesus asked. ***"Who do you say I am?"*** Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, ***"Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by My Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."*** Then He admonished the disciples not to tell anyone that He was

the Christ. From that time on Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests, and scribes, and that He must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. “Far be it from You, Lord!” he said. “This shall never happen to You!” But Jesus turned and said to Peter, ***“Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me. For you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.”***

Matthew 16:13–23 (BSB)

Here, Peter is the first to confess Jesus, as Christ. This is a record of Peter’s prominent role as leader and spokesperson of the disciples. Jesus affirmation of Peter’s statement points to this disciple as “rock” or “stone” (implied from Peter’s name ‘Petros’), and bestowing upon him high authority, an authority which is shared among all the disciples (Matthew 18:18), emphasizing that successful leadership in the Christian church is bestowed on those who are keeping their eyes on Jesus (Matthew 14:30) who sustains all believers by His presence and power (Matthew 28:18-20). (34)

Later, by the Sea of Tiberias, Jesus again revealed Himself to the disciples. He made Himself known in this way: Simon Peter, Thomas called Didymus, Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together. Simon Peter told them, “I am going fishing.” “We will go with you,” they said. So they went out and got into the boat, but caught nothing that night. Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not recognize that it was Jesus. So He called out to them, ***“Children, do you have any fish?”*** “No,” they answered. He told them, ***“Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some.”*** So they cast it there, and they were unable to haul it in because of the great number of fish. Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” As soon as Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment (for he had removed it) and jumped into the sea. The other disciples came ashore in the boat. They dragged in the net full of fish, for they were not far from land, only about a hundred yards. When they landed, they saw a charcoal fire there with fish on it, and some bread. Jesus told them, ***“Bring some of the fish you have just caught.”*** So Simon Peter went aboard and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many, the net was not torn. ***“Come, have breakfast,”*** Jesus said to them. None of the disciples dared to ask Him, “Who are You?” They knew it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and He did the same with the

fish. This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after He was raised from the dead. When they had finished eating, Jesus asked Simon Peter, ***"Simon son of John, do you love Me more than these?"*** "Yes, Lord," he answered, "You know I love You." Jesus replied, ***"Feed My lambs."*** Jesus asked a second time, ***"Simon son of John, do you love Me?"*** "Yes, Lord," he answered, "You know I love You." Jesus told him, ***"Shepherd My sheep."*** Jesus asked a third time, ***"Simon son of John, do you love Me?"*** Peter was deeply hurt that Jesus had asked him a third time, "Do you love Me?" "Lord, You know all things," he replied. "You know I love You." Jesus said to him, ***"Feed My sheep. Truly, truly, I tell you, when you were young, you dressed yourself and walked where you wanted; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go."*** Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. And after He had said this, He told him, ***"Follow Me."*** Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them. He was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper to ask, "Lord, who is going to betray You?" When Peter saw him, he asked, "Lord, what about him?" Jesus answered, ***"If I want him to remain until I return, what is that to you? You follow Me!"*** Because of this, the rumor spread among the brothers that this disciple would not die. However, Jesus did not say that he would not die, but only, "If I want him to remain until I return, what is that to you?" This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who has written them down. And we know that his testimony is true. There are many more things that Jesus did. If all of them were written down, I suppose that not even the world itself would have space for the books that would be written.

John 21 (BSB)

Following the fervent character of the Apostle Peter, who had denied Jesus three times prior to His crucifixion, in this chapter, we encounter Peter's restoration by Jesus - who knows that the great strength of Peter (his passion and impulsiveness) are also his greatest weaknesses. (d35) At this point (after Christ's resurrection), we realize that God's grace, love and forgiveness extend not only to the Apostles, but also to all Christians. Jesus overturns Peter's threefold denial (recorded in all four Gospels), by a threefold call to "feed my lambs," "tend my sheep," and "feed my sheep" (John 21:15-17), meaning that Peter now has the responsibility to look after those who turn to Jesus in faith, just as the other Apostles have the same responsibility (John 20:23). (d36)

After Christ's ascension, Peter encourages the other apostles to replace the 'false' Apostle, Judas Iscariot, as the believers pray and cast lots, and select Matthias as replacement (Acts 1) to ensure apostolic leadership is maintained, and that they could all be on equal footing, going out as missionaries, preachers and evangelists in order to establish the early church. (d37)

Conclusion

In summary, we see that Jesus' calling of the Twelve Apostles carries important theological significance. For one, Jesus establishes the new covenant with all Christians, as He transforms the old Mosaic covenant of the twelve tribes of Israel with His sovereign choice of the Twelve. Discipleship and service (preaching the good news) are at the forefront here, as Jesus delegates the responsibility of bringing God's kingdom to his disciples. (d38)

The selection of the Twelve also reveals that God is sovereign. We see this in the selection of Judas Iscariot (of whom Jesus knew he would betray Him later), pointing us to the theodicy of God, since God is never the author of evil and sin, but always accomplishes His divine sovereign will. (d39) Also, the fact that one of the Twelve betrayed Jesus (later replaced by Matthias), an early reference to the Twelve in 1 Corinthians 15:5, and, the significance of this group in Acts 1:21-26 points to the historicity of selecting the Twelve. (d40)

Furthermore, Jesus' interaction with the Apostles shows that we are dealing here with real people and real events, so that we can learn from them and identify with them. Along with the necessity and importance of prayer, as Jesus selects the Apostles (Luke 6:12-16), we understand that our Lord selected this important group of followers from among obscure and ordinary people (fisherman, a tax collector, etc.) with Peter, James and John being especially close to Jesus, as part of His 'inner circle.' (d41)

Lastly, especially in our Lord's interaction with the Apostle Peter, can we readily identify with a fellow human being, who, while often failed in His walk with Jesus, is never abandoned by our loving Heavenly Father, since Jesus restores Him - and all of us - who respond to Christ with a heart of repentance and humility. Our calling as Christians is to proclaim the Good News that forgiveness of sins is available to all who enter a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. (d42)

Notes

(d1) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.52.
(d2) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.53.
(d3) *Nelson's Complete Book Of Bible Maps And Charts*, 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010., p.329.

(d4) Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008., p.709.
(d5) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.53.
(d6) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.741.
(d7) Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008., p.684-685.
(d8) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.276.
(d9) *Nelson's Complete Book Of Bible Maps And Charts*, 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010., p.329.
(d10) Stein, Robert H. *Luke*. The New American Commentary: Volume 24. Nashville, TN: B&H, 1992., p.192.
(d11) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009., p.278.
(d12) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.55.
(d13) Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008., p.709.
(d14) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.276.
(d15) See Appendix A for a list of the twelve Apostles as recorded in Matthew, Mark, Luke and Acts. See Appendix B for a suggested sequence of events.
(d16) Stein, Robert H. *Luke*. The New American Commentary: Volume 24. Nashville, TN: B&H, 1992., p.191.
(d17) *Nelson's Complete Book Of Bible Maps And Charts*, 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010., p.331.
(d18) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.277.
(d19) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.743.
(d20) Stein, Robert H. *Luke*. The New American Commentary: Volume 24. Nashville, TN: B&H, 1992., p.194.
(d21) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.52.
(d22) Stein, Robert H. *Luke*. The New American Commentary: Volume 24. Nashville, TN: B&H, 1992., p.192.

(d23) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.742.
(d24) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.294.
(d25) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.451.
(d26) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009., p.277.
(d27) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.42-43.
(d28) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.542-543.
(d29) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.387-390.
(d30) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009., p.324.
(d31) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.278.
(d32) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.53.
(d33) Stein, Robert H. *Luke*. The New American Commentary: Volume 24. Nashville, TN: B&H, 1992., p.168.
(d34) Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020., p.293-295.
(d35) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.278.
(d36) Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008., p.710.
(d37) Stein, Robert H. *Luke*. The New American Commentary: Volume 24. Nashville, TN: B&H, 1992., p.195.
(d38) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.742.
(d39) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.390.

(d40) Stein, Robert H. *Luke*. The New American Commentary: Volume 24. Nashville, TN: B&H, 1992., p.192.
(d41) *Nelson's Complete Book Of Bible Maps And Charts*, 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010., p.329.
(d42) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009., p.323.

APPENDIX A

THE TWELVE APOSTLES			
Matthew 10:2-4	Mark 3:16-19	Luke 6:14-16	Acts 1:13
Simon Peter	Simon Peter	Simon Peter	Simon Peter
Andrew	James	Andrew	John
James	John	James	James
John	Andrew	John	Andrew
Philip	Philip	Philip	Philip
Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Thomas
Thomas	Matthew	Matthew	Bartholomew
Matthew	Thomas	Thomas	Matthew
James (of Alphaeus)	James (of Alphaeus)	James (of Alphaeus)	James (of Alphaeus)
Thaddaeus	Thaddaeus	Simon (the Zealot)	Simon (the Zealot)
Simon (the Canaanite)	Simon (the Canaanite)	Judas (of James)	Judas (of James)
Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	----------

Source: *Nelson's Complete Book Of Bible Maps And Charts*, 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010., p.331.

APPENDIX B

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS				
Key Events	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Jesus calls first disciples				1:35-51
Jesus first miracle in Cana (Galilee)				2:1-11
Jesus first stay at Capernaum (His homebase)				2:12
Jesus and Samaritan Woman				4:5-42
Four become fishers of people (Sea of Galilee)	4:18-22	1:16-20	5:1-11	
Matthew is called, gives reception	9:9-13	2:13-17	5:27-32	
Jesus selects twelve apostles		3:13-19	6:12-16	
Jesus sends out the twelve	9:35-11:1	6:7-13	9:1-6	
The twelve return, Jesus withdraws, feeding 5,000	14:13-21	6:30-44	9:10-17	6:1-15
Peter confesses Jesus as the Christ	16:13-20	8:27-30	9:18-21	
Jesus foretells His death, Peter rebuked (v.23)	16:21-26	8:31-38	9:22-25	
Jesus transfiguration (unnamed mountain)	17:1-13	9:2-13	9:28-36	
Jesus sends the seventy-two and joyful return			10:1-24	
James and John’s ambitions	20:20-28	10:35-45		
Judas agrees to betrayal of Jesus	26:14-16	14:10-11	22:3-6	
Passover meal	26:20	14:17	22:14-16, 24-30	
Feet washing				13:1-20
Judas revealed and leaves	26:21-25	14:18-21	22:21-23	13:21-30
Jesus predicts Peter’s denial	26:31-35	14:27-31	22:31-38	13:31-38

Last Supper	26:26-29	14:22-25	22:17-20	
Gethsemane grief of Jesus	26:30, 36-46	14:26, 32-42	22:39-46	18:1
Jesus betrayal, arrest, desertion	26:47-56	14:43-52	22:47-53	18:2-12
Peter's threefold denial	26:58, 69-75	14:54, 66-72	22:54-62	18:15-18, 25-27
Judas' suicide	27:3-10			
Jesus crucifixion, death and burial	27:31-66	15:20-46	23:26-56	19:16-42
Peter and John see empty tomb			24:12	20:3-10
Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene				20:11-18
Jesus appears to ten disciples without Thomas			24:36-43	20:19-25
Jesus appears to ten disciples with Thomas				20:26-31
Jesus appears by Sea of Galilee to seven disciples, Peter re-instated				21:1-25
The Great Commission	28:16-20			
The Ascension			24:50-53	
Judas is replaced by Matthias In Acts 1:12-26				

Adapted from Carson, D. A. ed. *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015., p.2200-2206.

Bibliography

Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009.

Carson, D. A. ed. *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015.

Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995.

Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.

Nelson's Complete Book Of Bible Maps And Charts, 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010.

Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008.

Stein, Robert H. *Luke*. The New American Commentary: Volume 24. Nashville, TN: B&H, 1992.

Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020.

Locations of Important Events in the Ministry of Jesus Christ

Introduction

As prophesied in the Old Testament, the New Testament Gospels reveal the fulfillment of these prophesies in and through the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. Following His birth, Christ's ministry is usually divided into His Galilean ministry, His journey toward Jerusalem, His ministry in Judea and His final week in and around Jerusalem. (e1) Jesus' ministry was that of an itinerant preacher and teacher, as He announces the arrival of God's Kingdom, revealed in Himself by His miracles and teachings, which eventually led to the unbelieving religious leaders handing Him over to be crucified by the Romans, His death, burial and resurrection (3 days after His death) and appearing to many eyewitnesses, prior to His ascension. (e2)

The following provides and overview of the locations of important events of Jesus' ministry, as far as they can be established. So, we are exploring the locations associated with Christ's birth, infancy and youth, those locations associated with the beginning of His ministry, His ministry in Galilee, in Judea and Perea, His final week in Jerusalem and crucifixion, as well as His resurrection appearances and ascension. (e3)

Birth, Infancy and Youth of Jesus Christ

This part of Jesus' life centers primarily around Nazareth in Galilee, where He grows up. This Galilean town (Nazareth), is not where Jesus is born, since His birthplace is in Bethlehem, located in Judea. (e4) Coming in the fullness of time (Galatians 4:4), God worked powerfully through many different people, one of them being Roman Emperor Caesar Augustus who issued a universal census for taxation purposes, not knowing he would be triggering the fulfillment of biblical prophecy (Micha 5:2; Luke 2:1-7), since the virgin Mary, as the mother of Jesus, would give birth to Him in Bethlehem, since her husband Joseph originally came from that town. (e5) As such, the circumstances of Jesus' birth, reveal that He was born in a manger (*phatnē*) (Luke 2:7), because there was no room anywhere else. (e6)

Following the angelic birth announcement to shepherds (nearby Bethlehem) (Luke 2:8-20), at the dedication of Jesus at the temple eight days later, Jesus is reaffirmed as Messiah by Simeon and Anna who prophecy about the child (Luke 2:21-40). Following the temporary escape to Egypt in

order to avoid persecution under Herod the Great, Joseph decides to settle his family in Nazareth, to avoid further persecution in Judea under the brutal ruler Archelaus (Matthew 2:19-23). (e7) However, the family continues to worship every year in Jerusalem at the Passover festival, and it is here that we get the one and only glimpse of Jesus' unique understanding and His special relationship with God (Luke 2:41-52). (e8) So Jesus grows up in Nazareth, located about three and a half miles southeast of Sepphoris, the regional capital at the time. (e9)

The Beginning of Jesus' Ministry

As Jesus' ministry begins we see Him moving along various locations. Jesus is baptized somewhere in the Jordan River (Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11, Luke 3:21-23; John 1:29-34) and tempted by the devil in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13). At the baptism Jesus is directly confirmed as Messiah, and successfully overcomes the temptation in the wilderness by the devil, thereby - as last Adam - accomplishing what the first Adam was not able to do, establishing Himself in trustful dependence on God Almighty. (e10)

Here, Jesus' ministry officially begins as He calls His first disciples (John 1:28), located somewhere beyond the Jordan River (either in Bethabara of Judea, or Bethany of Perea, based on the manuscript evidence). (e11) Jesus' predecessor, John the Baptist is later executed by Herod Antipas (Matthew 14:1-12; Mark 6:14-29; Luke 3:18-20), probably in Herod's fortress at Machaerus. (e12) Jesus performs His first miracle at Cana in Galilee (John 2:1-11) and travels with His disciples to Jerusalem, where He clears the temple for the first time (John 2:13-22) and teaches the Pharisee Nicodemus about the second birth (John 3:1-21).

Returning to Galilee from Judea, Jesus passes through Samaria, where He meets and converts the Samaritan woman at the well of Sychar (John 4:5-42) as well as many other Samaritans, but unfortunately later on - likely on His final journey to Jerusalem - an unnamed Samaritan village does not welcome Him (Luke 9:51-56). (e13) The precise description of the locations, during our Lord's encounter with the Samaritan woman, that is Sychar (modern Askar) and the Samaritan holy mountain, Mount Gerizim, authenticate that we are dealing here with real people, places and events. (e14)

The Ministry of Jesus in Galilee

The ministry of Jesus in Galilee, covers many different locations, often around the shore of the Sea of Galilee, with Capernaum as His ‘homebase’ from where He initiates His travels. Before this comes to pass, however, Jesus makes an appearance in His boyhood hometown of Nazareth. Here, at a synagogue service, Jesus reads from Isaiah 61 which He applies to Himself, which is a declaration that He is God’s Messiah - the ensuing rejection, foreshadows Christ’s rejection by His own people, yet providing spiritual deliverance through His resurrection for both Jew and Gentile. (e15)

Following this rejection in Nazareth, Jesus relocates to Capernaum, located on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee, where he establishes His homebase during the main part of His ministry - and does many miracles there: healing the centurion’s servant (Matthew 8:5-13), the paralytic lowered down through a roof (Mark 2:1-12) and healing Peter’s mother-in-law from a fever (Mark 1:29-31). (e16)

The Sea of Galilee and the fishing activity associated with it, provides a profound picture of authentic life, since Peter, James and John are working there as fisherman: casting nets from the shore (Matthew 4:18), from a boat (Luke 5:4), or using a dragnet (Matthew 13:47-50). (e17) The sea itself becomes an important training area for the disciples, as Jesus calms the sea from a storm (Matthew 8:23-27; Mark 4:35-41; Luke 8:22-25) and also walks on water (Matthew 14:22-23; Mark 6:45-52; John 6:16-21).

The historicity of Capernaum has been confirmed by archeological findings, and the two most likely reasons Jesus selected this town is that it was not a thoroughly Jewish city, with many Gentiles being either located there, or passing through, and that it provided a strategic geographical position from which Jesus could undertake His ministry, reaching many places in as little time as possible. (e18)

From his base in Capernaum, Jesus moves around to different Galilean locations among which He teaches the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:1-7:29), He brings back to life a widow’s son from the dead at Nain (Luke 7:11-17), He heals two demon-possessed men on the eastern shore of Galilee (Matthew 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-20; Luke 8:26-39), He feeds 5,000 near Bethsaida (Matthew 14:13-21; Mark 6:30-44; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-15), He travels outside of Galilee to Tyre, where He heals a Syrophoenician’s daughter (Matthew 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30) and Peter confesses Jesus as Messiah at Caesarea Philippi (Matthew 16:13-19). As such, Jesus is already preaching the Good News to both Jew and Gentile, several instances which are recorded in all four Gospels. (e19) In all of this, Jesus calls disciples, announces God’s Kingdom and performs miracles to reveal His divine authority. (e20)

Ministry of Jesus in Judea and Perea

Roundabout the last year of His ministry, Jesus is active primarily in Judea and Perea. The Gospel of John records Jesus attending three annual Passover festivals (John 2:13; 6:4-5; 11:55-56) in which he continues His missionary work, however, we have to leave open how many times Jesus made this annual trip to Jerusalem, since the Apostle John, explicitly says that he did not record *everything* that Jesus said and did. (e21)

The Gospels converge in that they all reveal Jesus' arrival in Judea as His last place of ministry. (e22) In Judea we learn about Jesus' friendship with Martha and Mary at Bethany (Luke 10:38-42) which culminates in the raising of Lazarus (the brother of Mary and Martha) in John 11:1-44. Travelling to and from Judea in this phase of His ministry, Jesus is active in the region east of the Jordan River (Perea) (Mark 10:1). (e23) As He begins His last journey to Jerusalem, Jesus heals ten lepers (border of Samaria and Galilee) (Luke 17:11), due to Samaritan opposition at that time. (e24) Our Lord's focus here is on teaching, answering and rebuking His religious opponents and increasingly emphasizing the cost of following Jesus. (e25) As such Jesus prepares for the climax of His redemptive mission as He moves east of the Jordan towards Jerusalem. (e26)

Final week of Jesus in Jerusalem and Vicinity

The final week of Jesus in Jerusalem and vicinity includes His triumphal entry (Matthew 21:1-11), second temple clearing (John 2:13-22), the Last Supper (Luke 22:7-30), His trial and crucifixion (Matthew 26:57-27:50),burial (Luke 23:50-56) and His resurrection appearances (John 20:1-31). (e27) All four Gospels provide additional (and also unique) details surrounding the events of this final week in Christ's life (a.k.a. 'Holy Week'), so that taken together they form a complete and well-rounded record of these events, pointing to their authenticity - many locations are unknown, such as that of the Last Supper, the crucifixion and the location of the tomb where Jesus is buried, while others, such as the Temple, the palace of Herod Antipas and the Roman Praetorium can be reconstructed geographically. (e28)

Resurrection Appearances and Ascension of Jesus Christ

Following Christ's trial, crucifixion and death, there are at least ten specific resurrection appearances recorded in the New Testament (e29) prior to the ascension, in addition to the appearance to the Apostle Paul on the Damascus road, attesting to the authenticity of these events. (e30)

Along with these resurrection appearances, one stands out for its geographical significance, and that is Christ's appearance to two disciples on the Road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35), which is the only event taking place on the west side of Jerusalem - based on biblical manuscript evidence and biblical archeology there are four possible candidates for the biblical Emmaus, yet it remains uncertain, which is the correct one. (e31)

The Gospel writers anchor their resurrection appearance claims on historical occasions, where they see Jesus, touch Him, eat with Him and listen to Him speaking - the geographical data provided in the Gospels lining up with the possible sequence of events and thereby authenticating the risen Lord Jesus. (e32) The ascension of Christ, takes place on the Mount of Olives, in the Jerusalem area (Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:6-12) and accentuates Christ's relatively short ministry of roundabout three years. (e33)

Conclusion

In sum, the locations of important events in Jesus' ministry, not only point to the authenticity of the Gospel accounts, but also give us more insight into the divine plan God provided for the salvation of those who will ever believe in Christ. As seen, a complementary picture of Christ's ministry emerges, with the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke focusing on our Lord's ministry in Galilee, whereas John emphasizes the ministry in and around Jerusalem (Judea). (e34)

God's sovereignty is seen in how He uses the initial census decree of Caesar Augustus, to prepare the way for Jesus as Messiah and open the door for the spread of the Gospel at the time of Jesus' ministry and thereafter. (e35) As Jesus' ministry begins, He spends most of His time in lower Galilee, having visited His hometown of Nazareth and making Capernaum His 'new' hometown. (e36)

The location of Capernaum in Galilee, with its mixed population (Jewish and Gentile) provides the background for Jesus' Galilean ministry on and around the Sea of Galilee. (e38) The references to fishing in the Gospels, which Jesus also refers to in His teaching (Matthew 7:10; Luke 11:11) and in His miracles (Luke 9:12-17; John 6:1-14; Mark 8:1-10) attest to the truthfulness of these events. (e38)

The ministry of Jesus in Judea and Perea, highlights Jesus' divinity, where, at Bethany, Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead (John 11:17-44) - and prompts Jesus to temporary seclusion at Ephraim/Ophrah (John 11:45-54), due to hostility from the religious leaders. (e39)

As the events of Jesus's ministry come to a close in Jerusalem with His arrest, trial and crucifixion, Jesus remains the incarnate Son of God, since He rises from the tomb on the third day. (e40) Lastly, Jesus' resurrection appearances authenticate Him as Messiah, connected to specific geographic locations culminating in His ascension on the Mount of Olives (e41) - pointing to the truth of His return at the Second Coming.

Notes

(e1) Nelson, Thomas. *NIV Chronological Study Bible*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2014., p.1104.
(e2) *Holy Bible NLT*. Filament-enabled Ed. Carol Stream: Tyndale House Publishers, 2015., p.z10-z11.
(e3) See Appendix A for a selection of events and locations surrounding the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.
(e4) *Nelson's Complete Book Of Bible Maps And Charts*, 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010., p.310.
(e5) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011., p.264.
(e6) Beitzel, Barry J. *The New Moody Atlas of the Bible*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2009., p.238.
(e7) Rasmussen, Carl G. *Zondervan Atlas of the Bible. Revised Edition*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.205.
(e8) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011., p.265.
(e9) Rasmussen, Carl G. *Zondervan Atlas of the Bible. Revised Edition*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.207.

(e10) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011., p.265.
(e11) Nelson, Thomas. *NIV Chronological Study Bible*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2014., p.1104.
(e12) Beitzel, Barry J. *The New Moody Atlas of the Bible*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2009., p.240.
(e13) Beitzel, Barry J. *The New Moody Atlas of the Bible*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2009., p.240-241.
(e14) Rasmussen, Carl G. *Zondervan Atlas of the Bible. Revised Edition*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.215.
(e15) Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020., p.324-325.
(e16) Rasmussen, Carl G. *Zondervan Atlas of the Bible. Revised Edition*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.209.
(e17) Duvall, J. Scott, and J. Daniel Hays, eds. *The Baker Illustrated Bible Background Commentary.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2020.,p.786.
(e18) Beitzel, Barry J. *The New Moody Atlas of the Bible*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2009., p.241.
(e19) *Nelson's Complete Book Of Bible Maps And Charts*, 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010., p.311.
(e20) Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020., p.324.
(e21) Beitzel, Barry J. *The New Moody Atlas of the Bible*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2009., p.246.
(e22) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009., p.356.
(e23) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011., p.265.
(e24) Rasmussen, Carl G. *Zondervan Atlas of the Bible. Revised Edition*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.215.
(e25) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009., p.356.
(e26) *Nelson's Complete Book Of Bible Maps And Charts*, 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010., p.311.
(e27) *Holy Bible NLT*. Filament-enabled Ed. Carol Stream: Tyndale House Publishers, 2015., p.z10.
(e28) *Nelson's Complete Book Of Bible Maps And Charts*, 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010., p.312-313.
(e29) See Appendix C for references to Jesus’ resurrection appearances.
(e30) *Nelson's Complete Book Of Bible Maps And Charts*, 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010., p.314.
(e31) Rasmussen, Carl G. *Zondervan Atlas of the Bible. Revised Edition*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.215.

(e32) Beitzel, Barry J. *The New Moody Atlas of the Bible*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2009., p.248.
(e33) Rasmussen, Carl G. *Zondervan Atlas of the Bible. Revised Edition*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.215.
(e34) Nelson, Thomas. *NIV Chronological Study Bible*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2014., p.1104.
(e35) Beitzel, Barry J. *The New Moody Atlas of the Bible*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2009., p.238.
(e36) Rasmussen, Carl G. *Zondervan Atlas of the Bible. Revised Edition*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.207.
(e37) *Nelson's Complete Book Of Bible Maps And Charts*, 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010., p.310.
(e38) Duvall, J. Scott, and J. Daniel Hays, eds. *The Baker Illustrated Bible Background Commentary.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2020.,p.786.
(e39) Beitzel, Barry J. *The New Moody Atlas of the Bible*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2009., p.247.
(e40) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011., p.264.
(e41) Beitzel, Barry J. *The New Moody Atlas of the Bible*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2009., p.248.

Appendix A*
Selected Events and Locations in Jesus' Life and Ministry

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JOHN
BIRTH, INFANCY, AND ADOLESCENCE OF JESUS AND JOHN THE BAPTIST						
7 BC	John the Baptist's Birth announced	Jerusalem (temple)			1:5-25	
7 or 6 BC	Jesus' birth announced to the virgin Mary	Nazareth			1:26-38	
ca. 5 BC	Elizabeth's song to Mary	Hill country of Judea			1:39-45	
	Mary's song of praise				1:46-56	
5 BC	Birth, infancy,	Judea			1:57-	

	and plan for future of John the Baptist				80	
	Jesus' birth announced to Joseph	Nazareth	1:18-25			
5-4 BC	Jesus Christ is born &&&	Bethlehem	1:25		2:1-7	
	Angelic Proclamation	Near Bethlehem			2:8-14	
	Shepherds visit Jesus	Bethlehem			2:15-20	
	Jesus is circumcised	Bethlehem			2:21	
4 BC	First temple visit, Simeon and Anna testify about Jesus	Jerusalem			2:22-38	
	Visit of the Magi	Jerusalem & Bethlehem	2:1-12			
	Flight to Egypt, slaughter of innocents	Bethlehem, Jerusalem & Egypt	2:13-18			
DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JOHN
	From Egypt to Nazareth with baby Jesus		2:19-23		2:39	
Afterward AD 7-8	Jesus' childhood	Nazareth			2:40	
	Jesus, visits the temple at age 12	Jerusalem			2:41-50	
Afterwar	18-year	Nazareth			2:51-	

d	summary of Jesus' youth into adulthood				52	
BEGINNING OF JESUS' MINISTRY						
ca. AD 27	Jesus is baptized	Jordan River	3:13-17	1:9-11	3:21-23	1:29-34
	Jesus is tempted	Wilderness	4:1-11	1:12-13	4:1-13	
	Calling first disciples	Beyond Jordan				1:35-51
	Jesus' first miracle	Cana in Galilee				2:1-11
AD 27	Jesus' First stay in Capernaum	(Capernaum is "his" new homebase)				2:12
	First cleansing of the temple	Jerusalem				2:13-22
	Jesus is received at Jerusalem	Jerusalem				2:23-25
	Jesus teaches Pharisee Nicodemus about second birth	Jerusalem				3:1-21
	Jesus' co-ministry with John	Judea				3:22-36
	Leaves for Galilee	Judea	4:12	1:14	4:14	4:1-4
	Jesus meets Samaritan woman at Jacob's Well	Samaria (town of Sychar)				4:5-42
	Jesus returns to Galilee			1:15	4:15	4:43-45
THE GALILEAN MINISTRY OF JESUS						
AD 27	Rejection at Nazareth (first rejection)	Nazareth			4:16-30	

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JOHN
AD 28	Jesus selects twelve apostles after a prayer night	Near Capernaum		3:13-19	6:12-16	
	Sermon on the Mount	Near Capernaum	5:1-7:29		6:20-49	
	Jesus raises a widow's son from the dead	Nain			7:11-17	
	Jesus calms the sea	Sea of Galilee	8:23-27	4:35-41	8:22-25	
	Gadarene (Gerasene) demon-possessed men are healed	Eastern shore of Galilee	8:28-34	5:1-20	8:26-39	
Spring AD 29	The 12 return, Jesus withdraws, 5,000 are fed	Near Bethsaida	14:13-21	6:30-44	9:10-17	6:1-15
	Jesus walks on the water	Sea of Galilee	14:22-33	6:45-52		6:16-21
AD 29	Syrophoenician's daughter healed	Tyre	15:21-28	7:24-30		
	Peter confesses Jesus as Christ	Near Caesarea Philippi	16:13-20	8:27-30	9:18-21	
	Jesus foretells his death and rebukes Peter	Caesarea Philippi	16:21-23	8:31-38	9:22-25	
	The transfiguration	Mountain unnamed	17:1-13	9:2-13	9:28-36	

LAST JUDEAN AND PEREAN MINISTRY OF JESUS						
Fall AD 29	Festival of Tabernacles	Jerusalem				7:2, 11-52
	Jesus heals man born blind	Jerusalem				9:1-41
	Hospitality of Martha and Mary	Bethany			10:38-42	
DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JOHN
Winter AD 29	Jesus teaches, with warning about Herod	Perea			13:22-35	
	Cost of discipleship	Perea			14:25-35	
	Lazarus resurrected	Perea to Bethany				11:1-44
AD 30	Last journey to Jerusalem begins via Samaria & Galilee	Samaria, Galilee			17:11	
	Jesus heals ten lepers				17:12-19	
JESUS' FINAL WEEK AROUND AND IN JERUSALEM						
Spring AD 30						
Sunday	Triumphal Entry	Bethany, Jerusalem, Bethany	21:1-9	11:1-11	19:28-44	12:12-19
Monday	Fig tree cursed and temple cleansed (2nd cleansing)	Bethany to Jerusalem	21:10-19	11:12-18	19:45-48	
	The inevitability of sacrifice	Jerusalem				12:20-50
Tuesday	Withered fig tree serves as testimony	Bethany to Jerusalem	21:20-22	11:19-26		
	Sanhedrin	Jerusalem	21:23-	11:27-	20:1-	

	challenges Jesus		22:14	12:12	19	
	Jesus tells about the future	Mount of Olives	24:1-51	13:1-37	21:5-36	
	Mary anoints Jesus at Simon the Leper’s meal	Bethany	26:6-13	14:3-9		12:2-8
Thursday	Preparation for Passover	Jerusalem	26:17-19	14:12-16	22:7-13	
Thursday p.m.	Passover is eaten, Jesus rebukes jealousy	Jerusalem	26:20	14:17	22:14-16, 24-30	
	Jesus washes disciples' feet	Upper Room				13:1-20
	Judas revealed, Judas defects	Upper Room	26:21-25	14:18-21	22:21-23	13:21-30
DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JOHN
	Last Supper	Upper Room	26:26-29	14:22-25	22:17-20	
Thursday - Friday	Gethsemane grief	Mount of Olives	26:30, 36-46	14:26, 32-42	22:39-46	18:1
Friday	Jesus’ betrayal, arrest, desertion	Gethsemane	26:47-56	14:43-52	22:47-53	18:2-12
	Trial by Sanhedrin; under Caiaphas	Jerusalem	26:57, 59-68	14:53, 55-65	22:54, 63-65	18:24
Friday	Peter’s threefold denial	Jerusalem	26:58, 69-75	14:54, 66-72	22:54-62	18:15-18, 25-27
	Sanhedrin condemns Jesus	Jerusalem	27:1	15:1	22:66-71	
	First appearance before Pilate	Jerusalem	22:2, 11-14	15:1-5	23:1-6	18:28-38
	Jesus before	Jerusalem			23:7-	

	Herod				12	
	Second appearance before Pilate	Jerusalem	27:15-26	15:6-15	23:13-25	18:39-19:16
	The events of first three hours on the cross	Golgotha	27:35-44	15:24-32	23:33-43	19:18-27
	Last three hours on cross (death of Jesus)	Golgotha	27:45-50	15:33-37	23:44, 46	19:28-30
	Jesus is buried	Jerusalem	27:57-61	15:42-46	23:50-54	19:31-42
Friday - Saturday	Jesus' tomb is sealed	Jerusalem	27:62-66			
	Women watch	Jerusalem		15:47	23:55-56	
THE RESURRECTION THROUGH THE ASCENSION						
AD 30						
At dawn of First Day (Sunday, "Lord's Day")	Women visit the tomb	Near Jerusalem	28:1-8	16:1-8	24:1-11	20:1-2
	Peter and John inspect empty tomb				24:12	20:3-10
DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JOHN
	Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene	Jerusalem				20:11-18
Sunday Afternoon	Jesus appears to two disciples walking to Emmaus				24:13-35	
Late Sunday	Jesus appears to ten disciples *without*	Jerusalem			24:36-43	20:19-25

	Thomas					
One week later	Appearance to disciples *with* Thomas	Jerusalem			24:44-49	20:26-31
During 40 Days until Ascension	Jesus appears to seven disciples by Sea of Galilee	Galilee				21:1-25
	The Great Commission		28:16-20			
	The Ascension	Mount Olivet			24:50-53	

*(Adapted from Carson, D. A. ed. *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015., p.2200-2206.

Appendix B**
Map With Places Mentioned in the Canonical Gospels

**Image CC BY-SA 4.0.

Appendix C***
References to Christ's Resurrection Appearances

- **In and around Jerusalem**
  To Mary Magdalene
  (John 20:11-18)
  To other women
  (Matthew 28:8-10)
  To Peter
  (Luke 24:34)
  To ten disciples
  (Luke 24:36-43; John 20:19-25)
  To the Eleven, including Thomas
  (John 20:26-29)
  At Christ's ascension
  (Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:4-12)

- **To the disciples on road to Emmaus**
  (Luke 24:13-35)

- **In Galilee**
  (Matthew 28:16-20; John 21:1-24)

- **To five hundred people**
  (1 Corinthians 15:6)

- **On the Damascus road to Apostle Paul**
  (Acts 9:1-6; 18:9, 10; 22:1-8; 23:11; 26:12-18; 1 Corinthians 15:8)

***Adapted from *Nelson's Complete Book Of Bible Maps And Charts*, 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010., p.376.

Bibliography

Beitzel, Barry J. *The New Moody Atlas of the Bible*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2009.

Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009.

Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011.

Duvall, J. Scott, and J. Daniel Hays, eds. *The Baker Illustrated Bible Background Commentary.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2020.

Holy Bible NLT. Filament-enabled Ed. Carol Stream: Tyndale House Publishers, 2015.

Nelson's Complete Book Of Bible Maps And Charts, 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010.

Nelson, Thomas. *NIV Chronological Study Bible*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2014.

Rasmussen, Carl G. *Zondervan Atlas of the Bible. Revised Edition*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.

Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020.

Introduction

In the Bible, we read about Satan and demons, especially in the New Testament, as Jesus is confronted by these spiritual forces. As such, the main witnesses to the existence and reality of Satan is the testimony of Scripture itself. (f1) Satan (Hebrew śātān, “adversary” or “accuser”) is the greatest adversary of God and human beings, and based on what the Bible tells us, he is a fallen being (John 8:44), who is condemned by God, due to his pride (1 Timothy 3:6). (f2)

Satan appears in the Old Testament, at different events, and figures most prominently in His temptation of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3), resulting in the sin and fall of our first human ancestors. Another name for Satan is devil, and he is a powerful and dangerous being, who initiates evil (Matthew 4:1; 13:39; John 13:2, etc.) with those under his control being children of the devil (1 John 3:10; John 6:70; 8:44). (f3)

Satan’s main goal is to thwart God’s will and to destroy God’s people, that is Christians. (f4) So, although Christ’s work on the cross defeated Satan, demons, evil and broke the power of sin, until Jesus returns on Judgment Day, Satan is still real, active and dangerous, since he operates in the spiritual realm, and must not be underestimated. (f5)

The following is a brief exploration of the work of Satan as recorded in the Bible, looking at the Old Testament background, looking at Jesus interaction with the demonic realm in the Gospels, and considering Jesus’ ongoing work in the New Testament, culminating in the final defeat of Satan on Judgment Day.

Old Testament Background

The work and activity of Satan is recorded in the Old Testament, and reveals him as ‘adversary’ - that is, his opposition to God and God’s people (Job 1-2; 1 Chronicles 21:1; Zechariah 3:1-2). (f6) In the Garden of Eden, Satan seduces Adam and Eve to sin against God (Genesis 3:1-7; 2 Corinthians 11:3), displaying his consistent hatred of God and everything that is good, using deception as his main method. (f7)

In Job 1:7-2:7, Satan appears as God's enemy and is allowed (within God's set boundaries) to place Job under severe temptations, hardships and suffering. (f8) In 1 Chronicles 21:1, Satan (used here as a proper name) succeeds in tempting David to take a census of his people. (f9) In Zechariah 3:1-2, Satan accuses the Israelite nation before God. (f10) Idolatry of the people of Israel is manifested at different times in the Old Testament, where people often worshiped false "gods," which are really demons, that is, fallen angels aligned with Satan (Deuteronomy 32:16-17; Psalm 106:35-37). (f11)

Lastly, the Old Testament reveals only a little about the origin of Satan, that is his original state before his fall (Ezekiel 28:12-15), and Satan's fall is referred to in Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14, where we learn that because he sinned against God (wanting to establish his own throne above God's throne), God cast Satan out of heaven. (f12) This judgment of Satan (Ezekiel 28:16-17; Revelation 12:4) is linked to his ultimate defeat in Genesis 3:15 (the 'protoevangelium') promising that Christ was going to be victorious over him at the cross - with Satan to be eternally defeated on Judgment Day, when he is cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:7-10). (f13)

Jesus and the Demonic Realm

Then He went down to Capernaum, a town in Galilee, and on the Sabbath He began to teach the people. They were astonished at His teaching, because His message had authority. In the synagogue there was a man possessed by the spirit of an unclean demon. He cried out in a loud voice, "Ha! What do You want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!" But Jesus rebuked the demon. ***"Be silent!"*** He said. ***"Come out of him!"*** At this, the demon threw the man down before them all and came out without harming him. All the people were overcome with amazement and asked one another, "What is this message? With authority and power He commands the unclean spirits, and they come out!" And the news about Jesus spread throughout the surrounding region.
Luke 4:31–37 (BSB)

Keeping the foregoing Old Testament background in mind, we are now looking at Jesus Christ, His work and victory over the demonic realm in the New Testament Gospels. Here, we are considering Christ's interaction with demons and Satan himself.

As recorded in the Gospel, Jesus has several encounters with demons. In the passage above (also in Mark 1:21-28) we learn about Jesus in the

Synagogue at Capernaum casting out a demon (v.35) followed by a recognition of witnesses to this event (v.36), with the result that people spread this news everywhere. This is Jesus' first encounter (after His own temptation by Satan in the wilderness) in which Jesus deals specifically with Satan's associates (demons) - who recognize Christ's identity (v34) but are powerless against Jesus and His saving grace. (f14)

God works through Jesus as His agent of salvation, since Jesus demonstrates His unique authority over the demonic realm, recorded in several other instances in the Gospels: casting out a legion of demons from a Gerasene man (Matthew 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-20; Luke 8:26-39); healing a mute demon-possessed man (Matthew 9:32-34); driving out a demon from the daughter of a Syrophoenician woman at Tyre (Matthew 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30) and healing a demon-possessed boy (Matthew 17:14-21; Mark 9:14-29; Luke 9:37-42). In Luke 8:2, we also learn that Jesus cast out demons from other people, such as Mary Magdalene whom He delivered from seven demons. Later, she is the first of many others to witness the resurrection of Jesus (John 20:11-18). The power of Jesus Christ over the demonic realm, is unique in the history of mankind. (f15)

Jesus Confronts Satan in the Wilderness

Then Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, where for forty days He was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and when they had ended, He was hungry. The devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread." But Jesus answered, ***"It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone.'"*** Then the devil led Him up to a high place and showed Him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. "I will give You authority over all these kingdoms and all their glory," he said. "For it has been relinquished to me, and I can give it to anyone I wish. So if You worship me, it will all be Yours." But Jesus answered, ***"It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.'"*** Then the devil led Him to Jerusalem and set Him on the pinnacle of the temple. "If You are the Son of God," he said, "throw Yourself down from here. For it is written: 'He will command His angels concerning You to guard You carefully; and they will lift You up in their hands, so that You will not strike Your foot against a stone.'" But Jesus answered, ***"It also says, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"*** When the devil had finished every temptation, he left Him until an opportune time.
Luke 4:1–13 (BSB)

Along with demonstrating His power over demons, the Gospels record Christ's power over the 'head' of demons, namely Satan. As we see, in the above passage, the devil uses several specific temptations (also recorded in Matthew 4:1-11 in a different order with other details) to entice Jesus to sin against God-the Father. Here, Luke records, as does Matthew, that the Holy Spirit leads Jesus into this encounter with the devil, in order to provide yet another attestation of Jesus' divine sonship (following His baptism). (f16)

The temptations are real, and in the first one, points to a need (hunger), since Jesus is in the wilderness forty days eating nothing (v2). Unlike Adam in Genesis, Jesus overcomes this and the other two temptations, revealing our Lord's battle with cosmic forces. (f13) In these temptations, the devil is trying to get Jesus to think about what it means to be God's Son, that is getting Jesus to exercise His own power satisfying His own needs - yet, Jesus defends Himself solely by using God's Word: "It is written" (v.4, v.8, v.12). (f18)

For us as Christians, we are to follow Christ's example, and use God's Word to speak back to any attempts Satan makes to lead us into temptation - Scripture is our ultimate defense. (f19) As we learn here (v.10-11), Satan also has knowledge of the Bible, but (ab-)uses it, to accomplish his deceptive course of action. (f20) This is why it is crucial for us as believers to immerse ourselves in Scripture, and know what the Bible says, so that we can withstand Satan's attacks as well as 'false teachers,' who may sound biblical, but are in truth evil and opposed to Jesus.

In the case of the Gospels, Jesus helps us understand more about Satan and his evil schemes, as He makes clear what Christ's followers need to know. As Christ reveals (Luke 10:18) God has triumphed over Satan's power, showing that the devil is no match for God (and no match for Jesus). (f21) Jesus makes absolutely clear that the devil has no power over Him (John 14:30), since Jesus is free from sin, unlike us, who are born with a sin nature, and therefore called upon to put on the whole armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-18), and in that way have Christ fighting for us in His strength and authority over demonic powers. (f22)

As Jesus continues His ministry in the Gospels, we see time and time again, that Satan also temps other people. As such, Jesus is aware of Satan's activity at all time, for example trying to get Peter to sin (Luke 22:31-34; Matthew 16:21-23) - this is Satan's attempt to get Peter (and the other Apostles) to commit apostasy against Christ. (f23) In the case of Judas Iscariot, Satan is successful prompting Judas to betray Jesus (John 13:2, 27), which Jesus is fully aware of, even calling Judas "a devil" (John 6:70). (f24)

Then a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute was brought to Jesus, and He healed the man so that he could speak and see. The crowds were astounded and asked, “Could this be the Son of David?” But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, “Only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, does this man drive out demons.” Knowing their thoughts, Jesus said to them, ***“Every kingdom divided against itself will be laid waste, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand. If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand? And if I drive out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. Or again, how can anyone enter a strong man’s house and steal his possessions, unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can plunder his house. He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters. Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the one to come.”***

Matthew 12:22–32 (BSB)

In this passage, we encounter some people whose hearts are so hardened that they not only deny Jesus as Christ, but also accuse Him of being empowered by Satan himself (the never repeatable, so-called ‘unpardonable sin’). Jesus sets the record straight, and points out the futility and blatant self-contradiction of the Pharisees’ statement (v.25-29). In v.32 Jesus explains that speaking against the Holy Spirit, is a form of blasphemy - equal to denying Jesus Christ, as God in the Flesh. As we see here, Satan has blinded the Pharisees hearts to the point that they stand in direct opposition to God’s kingdom. The moral evil we see here in the religious leaders, is identified with Satan’s moral evil (John 8:44). (f26) The same event here (as

recorded in Luke 11:20-23), shows that Jesus has overcome the spiritual forces of evil (Satan and demons).

Jesus Ongoing Work in the New Testament

Outside of the Gospels, after Christ's resurrection and ascension, we hear many examples of our Lord's ongoing work against Satan and the demonic realm. In the book of Acts, for example, we see unbelievers attempting to cast out demons with disastrous results (Acts 19:13-16), since they are (ab-)using Christ's name - as some mere form of 'magical' formula - without having the spiritual authority from Christ. (f28) Then, earlier, in Acts 5:1-11, we learn about the sin of Ananias and Sapphira who - (having been blinded by Satan, v.3) conspire to test the Holy Spirit, by lying to the Apostle Peter, who pronounces God's judgment against the two. We see here that - even after Christ's atoning work on the cross - Satan's power is limited, yet remains real and exceedingly dangerous. (f29)

In the New Testament Epistles, we find further manifestations of Satan's demonic authority, since several Epistle writers, sternly warn fellow believers (and us as Christians), to be alert of the devil's schemes. While Satan is stronger than any of us, Christ has triumphed over him, and helps us resist the devil, as we as believers claim our identity in Christ (Ephesians 5:10-13; James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:9-10). (f30) In the same way, the Apostle John reminds us that:

> You, little children, are from God and have overcome them, because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.
> 1 John 4:4 (BSB)

In Revelation, which is also a letter of the Apostle John, we are reminded that Satan is not God's equal, since God cast him out of heaven (Revelation 12:7-9), and that the devil's eternal destination and his demons is "the eternal fire" prepared for him along with his evil angels (Revelation 20:7-10; Matthew 25:41).

Conclusion

In summary, we see that Satan - all throughout the Bible - stands in opposition to God, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit and us as Christians today.

As seen, in the Old Testament, following Satan's successful deception of Adam and Eve, causing them to sin (Genesis 3), the devil is actively at work in the background, tempting Job, King David and also showing up as accuser of the Israelite people in the book of Zechariah. Prior to Jesus' arrival, ministry and work on the cross, the Hebrew people are time and time again successfully tempted by the devil and his demons, primarily through worshiping demonic idols, that is demons (so-called 'gods' of the pagans) causing people to engage in godless, destructive practices. (f32)

With Jesus on the scene, Satan and the demonic realm is in upheaval, even attesting to Jesus Christ as God's Son. They are all no match for Jesus who casts out all demons, simply by the power of God's Word. Before Jesus' ministry - in the Old Testament - no one has been able to accomplish what Christ does, and as seen in Jesus's temptation in the wilderness, Jesus defeats Satan himself, who tries to get Jesus to sin. It is also in Christ's dealing with other people, that we realize our Lord being in full control and command over the devil at all times - and even as Satan enters Judas Iscariot to betray Jesus, we realize that Jesus is fully in divine control. (f33)

Following Christ's resurrection and ascension, we understand that Satan is still at work in the background and remains a powerful foe to be reckoned with. Sin is the main channel through which Satan has authority over unbelievers (Ephesians 2:2) and only by surrendering to Christ in repentance can Christ overcome Satan for us. (f34)

While we as Christians await the final defeat of Satan at Christ's Second Coming (Revelation 20:10) and are aware that denying Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior, results in the same eternal outcome as the devil's destiny (Revelation 20:11-15!!!), as believers we are called to persevere to the end, empowered by the Holy Spirit. On a practical level - as Jesus teaches us and the Bible reveals - we are to be aware of counterfeit Christians (Matthew 13:25, 38-39), aware of people whose minds have been blinded by the devil to reject the gospel (2 Corinthians 4:3-4), believing the devil's lies (2 Thessalonians 2:9-10), aware that he poses as "an angel of light," establishing his own 'false teachers' (2 Corinthians 11:13-15), aware of the devil's fierce battle with believers (Ephesians 6:11-18) attempting our destruction (1 Peter 5:8) and attempting to thwart the work of Christians for God's kingdom. (f35)

Therefore, we must acknowledge Satan's reality, let the Holy Spirit make us aware as believers of his deceptive strategies, and realize that

although the devil has much knowledge and power, he is neither omniscient, nor omnipotent, and God has limited the working of this formidable foe. (f36) Our best defense against Satan and the realm of evil is Jesus Christ Himself, as our personal Lord and Savior, since through Christ's substitutionary death, Jesus defeated the devil, who had the power of death over all mankind, but not anymore, since Christ has broken that power. (f37) The writer of Hebrews reminds us:

> Now since the children have flesh and blood, He too shared in their humanity, so that by His death He might destroy him who holds the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.
> Hebrews 2:14–15 (BSB)

Notes

(f1) Enns, Paul P. *The Moody Handbook of Theology: Revised and Expanded*. Chicago, IL:
Moody Publishers, 2014., p.306.
(f2) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011, p.1289-1290.
(f3) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011, p.356.
(f4) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.586.
(f5) Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008., p.369.
(f6) Packer, J. I. *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1993., p.85.

(f7) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011, p.1290.
(f8) Grudem, Wayne A. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand
Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000., p.414.
(f9) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011, p.1290.
(f10) Enns, Paul P. *The Moody Handbook of Theology: Revised and Expanded*. Chicago, IL:
Moody Publishers, 2014., p.306.
(f11) Grudem, Wayne A. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand
Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000., p.417.
(f12) Enns, Paul P. *The Moody Handbook of Theology: Revised and Expanded*. Chicago, IL:
Moody Publishers, 2014., p.307.
(f13) Enns, Paul P. *The Moody Handbook of Theology: Revised and Expanded*. Chicago, IL:
Moody Publishers, 2014., p.308.
(f14) Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020., p.242-243.
(f15) Grudem, Wayne A. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand
Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000., p.418.
(f16) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.140.
(f17) Bock, Darrell L. *A Theology of Luke and Acts: God's Promised Program, Realized for All*
Nations. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2012., p.398.
(f18) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.141.
(f19) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.588.
(f20) Enns, Paul P. *The Moody Handbook of Theology: Revised and Expanded*. Chicago, IL:
Moody Publishers, 2014., p.306.
(f21) Grudem, Wayne A. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand
Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000., p.419.

(f22) Grudem, Wayne A. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand
Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000., p.418-419.

(f23) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.275.
(f24) Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020., p.395.
(f25) Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020., p.242.
(f26) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011, p.1290.
(f27) Bock, Darrell L. *A Theology of Luke and Acts: God's Promised Program, Realized for All Nations*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2012., p.398.
(f28) Grudem, Wayne A. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000., p.418.
(f29) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.588.
(f30) Packer, J. I. *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1993., p.86.
(f31) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011, p.1291.
(f32) Grudem, Wayne A. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000., p.417.
(f33) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.313.
(f34) Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008., p.369.
(f35) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011, p.1291.
(f36) Packer, J. I. *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1993., p.86.
(f37) Enns, Paul P. *The Moody Handbook of Theology: Revised and Expanded*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014., p.308.

Bibliography

Bock, Darrell L. *A Theology of Luke and Acts: God's Promised Program, Realized for All Nations*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2012.

Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011.

Enns, Paul P. *The Moody Handbook of Theology: Revised and Expanded*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014.

Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995.

Grudem, Wayne A. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000.

Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012.

Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.

Packer, J. I. *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1993.

Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008.

Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020.

The Parables of Jesus Christ

1 Once again Jesus began to teach beside the sea, and such a large crowd
gathered around Him that He got into a boat and sat in it, while all the
people crowded along the shore.
2 And He taught them many things in parables, and in His teaching He said,
3 “Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed.
4 And as he was sowing, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came
and devoured it.
5 Some fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up
quickly because the soil was shallow.
6 But when the sun rose, the seedlings were scorched, and they withered
because they had no root.
7 Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the seedlings,
and they yielded no crop.
8 Still other seed fell on good soil, where it sprouted, grew up, and produced
a crop—one bearing thirtyfold, another sixtyfold, and another a
hundredfold.”
9 Then Jesus said, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.” (Mark 4:1-9 BSB)

Introduction

As we learn more about Jesus Christ in the Gospel accounts (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John), in addition to performing miracles, we also encounter Him teaching and preaching. While much of His teaching is found in the so-called ‘Sermon on the Mount’ (Matthew 5-7), He also taught by means of speaking in the above verse (Mark 4:1-9). The way He speaks here is commonly known as a *parable*. The following provides and overview of Jesus’ parables, answering questions, such as ‘What is a parable?’; ‘Are parables the same as allegories?’; ‘Why did He use parables?’; ‘How can we understand them?’; ‘Who are the main characters in a parable?’; ‘Do the parables have one single lesson, or more?’; ‘What are the main themes we find in them?’; ‘How have parables been interpreted in church history?’; ‘How do the parables apply to your life, what can you learn from them and how can you put the lessons into practice?’; ‘What are some practical tips to study Jesus’ parables?’

These are some of the items we want to consider, while keeping in mind that the most important part of Jesus' ministry - then as it is now - is a call to repentance. This is the main truth we find in all of His teaching, including the parables, and is the difference of spending eternity separated from God (in hell) or spending eternity with Jesus (in heaven). This is a matter of the heart, and Jesus calls us all to Himself: "My sheep listen to My voice; I know them and they follow Me…no one can snatch them out of My hand." (John 10:27-28).

Note: All Scripture verses are from the Berean Standard Bible (BSB)

What is a Parable?

What is a parable? A parable is basically a comparison. We can see this for instance in the parable of 'The Sower and the Soils' (Matthew 13:3-8, 18-23). Here the comparison is between those who reject Jesus and those who accept Him, by using an agricultural example. (1)

A parable can encompass a larger spectrum of meaning. As such, there are *terms* that are related to a parable and can be part of a parable. These are simile, metaphor and allegory.

A simile is a comparison of the things with the words "like," or "as." We can find a good example of this in Jesus' parable of 'The Yeast' (aka. Parable of 'The Leaven') (italics mine): "The kingdom of heaven is *like leaven*…until all was leavened." (Matthew 13:33). (2)

A metaphor, is also a comparison of two things, but unlike a simile, it does so more directly, without the words "like" or "as." An illustration of this can be seen in Jesus ' using metaphorical language in His parable 'The Lesson of the Lamp,' when He says "You are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14). (3)

An allegory is a more advanced form of metaphor (a narrative, story or detailed account) using symbols. So something stands for something else. (4) We can find an example in the New Testament in the writings of Paul (Galatians 4:21-5:1) where he adapts the Old Testament events (Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar) to describe how life under the law and new life in Christ differ - the former as a religion of bondage, the latter as a religion of freedom (5):

21 Tell me, you who want to be under the law, do you not understand what the law says?
22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman.

23 His son by the slave woman was born according to the flesh, but his son
by the free woman was born through the promise.
24 These things serve as illustrations, for the women represent two
covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children into slavery:
This is Hagar.
25 Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the
present-day Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children.
26 But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother.
27 For it is written:
“Rejoice, O barren woman,
who bears no children;
break forth and cry aloud,
you who have never travailed;
because more are the children of the desolate woman
than of her who has a husband.”
28 Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise.
29 At that time, however, the son born by the flesh persecuted the son born
by the Spirit. It is the same now.
30 But what does the Scripture say? “Expel the slave woman and her son, for
the slave woman’s son will never share in the inheritance with the free
woman’s son.”
31 Therefore, brothers, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the
free woman.
1 It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not be
encumbered once more by a yoke of slavery.
(Galatians 4:21-5:1)

In the history of the church, Jesus’ parable were considered to be detailed allegories. (6) (Note: we are looking at some of these considerations of church history in part six of this article, exploring selected examples). However, we must understand that Jesus’ parables are not allegories, despite the fact that at times they contain allegorical parts. (7) The challenge and danger over time, has been to ‘over allegorize’ the parables of Jesus, i.e. this is the idea that *every* detail stands for something else, or a ‘hidden’ higher truth. That is certainly not the case.

Lastly, the parables of Jesus are always part of a larger context (which cannot be ignored). In the Gospels, Jesus is always talking to a person, or group of people (sometimes the Bible does not tell us who He is talking to), and also (though not often) He explains His parable (Matthew 13:3-8; 18-23; Mark 4:3-8, 14-20; Luke 8:5-8, 11-15). As we are investigating our Lord’s parables further - in part five - we are following Bloomberg in his approach which affirms that while there is not an unlimited amount of points Jesus is making, there is more than just (exactly) one point (or theme) per parable. (8) As said, to avoid ‘over-allegorizing’ or reading things into Christ’s words,

we do well to go about understanding His parables, with care, prayerfully, and being guided by the Holy Spirit: “But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have told you.” (John 14:26).

Why did Jesus use parables?

10 Then the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Why do You speak to the people in parables?”
11 He replied, “The knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them.
12 Whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.
13 This is why I speak to them in parables:
‘Though seeing, they do not see;
though hearing, they do not hear or understand.’
14 In them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled:
‘You will be ever hearing but never understanding;
you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.
15 For this people’s heart has grown callous;
they hardly hear with their ears,
and they have closed their eyes.
Otherwise they might see with their eyes,
hear with their ears,
understand with their hearts,
and turn, and I would heal them.’
(Matthew 13:10-15) - (see also in Mark 4:10-12; Luke 8:9-10, 10:23-24)

Why did Jesus use parables? While not in all of His communicating with others, Jesus does use parables in over one third of His teaching in the first three Gospels. (9) So, just as the disciples, we may ask why Jesus uses parables; more precisely - why in some instances He speaks *to people* in parables. As such, in Matthew 13:1-23, we find the Parable of the ‘The Sower and the Soils’ (v.1-9), Jesus revealing the purpose of His parables (v.11-17) and our Lord explaining the Parable of the Sower (v.18-23). Let us take a closer look at how this all fits together and what Christ is doing here:

‘The Parable of the Sower and the Soils’

1 That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea.
2 Such large crowds gathered around Him that He got into a boat and sat down, while all the people stood on the shore.

3 And He told them many things in parables, saying, “A farmer went out to
sow his seed.
4 And as he was sowing, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came
and devoured it.
5 Some fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up
quickly because the soil was shallow.
6 But when the sun rose, the seedlings were scorched, and they withered
because they had no root.
7 Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the seedlings.
8 Still other seed fell on good soil and produced a crop—a hundredfold,
sixtyfold, or thirtyfold.
9 He who has ears, a let him hear.”
(Matthew 13:1-9)

Jesus is speaking here to a crowd at the Sea of Galilee, so large, that He has to get into a boat to teach the masses of people standing on the shore. For anyone hearing the parable for the first time that Jesus uses here, namely ‘The Parable of the Sower and the Soils’ (which also appears in Mark 4:3-9), it may not be immediately apparent that this is a parable about parables. (10) The emphasis here is on the different kinds of soils and the kind (if any) crop they produce. It is only the latter soil that produces lasting crops. When Jesus says, “He who has ears, let him hear,” (v.9) this is a warning to understand and heed His words, and also indicates the need for carefully interpreting this parable. (11)

The purpose of Jesus’ parable(s)

This brings us to the purpose of Jesus’ parable(s). Jesus, of course, knows that further explanation is needed, and so it is no surprise that His disciples ask Him, *why* He speaks to the people in parables.

11 He replied, “The knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven
has been given to you, but not to them.
12 Whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever
does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.
(Matthew 13:11-12)

As Jesus responds to His disciples (v.11-12), we realize that our Lord is revealing truths about God’s kingdom, that is those who receive God’s Word with a repentant, humbled obedient heart, will receive and understand more (v.12), and the unrepentant, that is unbelievers here, will lose understanding, because of their unbelief and hardened heart. (12) This leads us to v.13, where Jesus says: “This is why I speak to them in parables: ‘Though seeing,

they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand.’” (Matthew 13:13).

Here, Jesus applies his response to people, who are not His disciples, that is unbelievers. (13) There is here a sense of spiritual blindness or dullness, which we can find in the Old Testament, e.g. Deuteronomy 29:4; Isaiah 42:20; Jeremiah 5:21 and Ezekiel 12:2. As such, in our Lord’s application, we realize there is a continuation of people, who - for whatever reason - will not turn to God (Christ). This is a stern warning and sober reality for us all.

What follows, is Christ formally quoting the Old Testament prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 6:9-10) in Matthew 13:14-15.

14 In them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled:
‘You will be ever hearing but never understanding;
you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.
15 For this people’s heart has grown callous;
they hardly hear with their ears,
and they have closed their eyes.
Otherwise they might see with their eyes,
hear with their ears,
understand with their hearts,
and turn, and I would heal them.’
(Matthew 13:14-15)

This is the first explicitly fulfilled prophecy in Matthew’s Gospel that seems to deal with some people in Jesus’ audience, rather than our Lord Himself. (14) There is judgment on those who will not turn to God, away from idols, or away from anything else standing between unbelieving people and Jesus Christ. By contrast, Jesus reveals His blessing upon His disciples, since they do properly receive and respond to His Words (v.16), just as godly people in the Old Testament desired (v.17). (15)

10 As soon as Jesus was alone with the Twelve and those around Him, they asked Him about the parable.
11 He replied, “The mystery of the kingdom of God has been given to you, but to those on the outside everything is expressed in parables,
12 so that, ‘they may be ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding; otherwise they might turn and be forgiven.’”
(Mark 4:10-12)

Furthermore, if we consider the parallel account in Mark 4:10-12, where Jesus reveals the reason for speaking in parables, we can learn more about the purpose for doing so. First, when Jesus talks about “the mystery of the kingdom of God,” and about those “on the outside,” (v.11) He is concealing His teachings from people who are hostile toward him. At the time, those included many, such as the Sadducees, the Pharisees and even the Romans with Pilate as governor, who viewed Jesus as a threat to their earthly authority. Second, the parables are good illustrations of Jesus’ message of the kingdom of God, revealing what is in the hearts of people (good or evil), which even caused those on the “outside” to react to these illustrations with evil intentions (see Mark 12:12). Third, Jesus used parables to debilitate those hearing His words. A good example of this can be found in Jesus’ encounter with Simon, the Pharisee (Luke 7:36-50) where the parable Jesus uses reveals the hardness of this person’s heart. (16)

Jesus explains His parable (Matthew 13:18-23; also found in Mark 4:13-20; Luke 8:11-15)

18 Consider, then, the parable of the sower:
19 When anyone hears the message of the kingdom but does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path.
20 The seed sown on rocky ground is the one who hears the word and at once receives it with joy.
21 But since he has no root, he remains for only a season. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away.
22 The seed sown among the thorns is the one who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.
23 But the seed sown on good soil is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and produces a crop—a hundredfold, sixtyfold, or thirtyfold.”
(Matthew 13:18-23)

This brings us to Jesus providing the explanation of ‘The Parable of the Sower and the Soils.’ We find this explanation in Matthew, Mark and Luke. The seed is God’s Word (Luke 8:11). Satan, the devil, is the one who takes away this seed away from people’s hearts, keeping them in unbelief and away from eternal salvation (Luke 8:12). The second ‘soil’ on which the seed falls, are people who have no root, and fall away quickly when “trouble or persecution comes because of the word,” (Matthew 13:20-21), i.e. there has been no true transformation of their lives. (17) The third ‘soil’ is unproductive, due to the worries of this life, and “the deceitfulness of wealth” (Matthew 13:22). Unlike the previous three, it is only the last example, that of the ‘good soil’ on which the seed falls, that is productive

(Matthew 13:23). These are people who are open and receptive to God's Word, soft-hearted, with Jesus' truth producing a life bent towards God. (18)

Summary: Why did Jesus use Parables?

To sum up the foregoing, we realize how gracious, merciful and loving our Lord Jesus Christ is, in that He not only guides us to understand His Word, in helping us grasp why He uses Parables, but also calls us to respond with open hearts.

As seen in 'The Parable of the Sower and the Soils' Jesus issues a stern warning to all people to listen and understand Him (v.9). Consistent with the entire Bible, there will be 'outsiders,' that is people who will not repent of their sins, turn to Jesus, follow Him as disciples and surrender to His teachings on "the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 13:11). (19)

Also in revealing the purpose of His parables, our Lord shows us that, even though there are fewer parables in the Old Testament - He uses them in a way and to a degree unparalleled before and after His time. (20) These are His words, and they are unique in purpose and scope. As Jesus reveals, His parables, after making their points, either attract or keep away its listeners. The former are convicted and repent, while the latter may even grow in their hostility to Him (Mark 12:12). There is no middle ground for a listener. (21)

Finally, as we consider the explanation of the above parable, we should note that everything in His interpretation of the parable is fully consistent with His teachings. (22) Jesus' parables and teachings are authentic, as is every word He speaks. As 'God in the Flesh,' Christ shows us here - in His words - His absolute authority. (23) While this may sound like a harsh reality - which it is - we realize that Jesus came not only to teach, but also to pronounce judgment (on people who will not surrender and repent). (24)

The bottom line is that, as He interprets His parable and explains why He uses parables, He is pointing to spiritual truth and realities: Responding (or not responding) to Him is a matter of the heart. So, as we consider 40 parables of Jesus here, all of us have to ask ourselves, prayerfully, 'What does this tell me about God's Kingdom?' and 'How does it apply to my life?' (25) which we will look at with some practical tips, in part eight. This brings us to the question of how *we* can understand the parables.

How can we understand the parables?

1 Then the LORD sent Nathan to David, and when he arrived, he said, "There were two men in a certain city, one rich and the other poor.

2 The rich man had a great number of sheep and cattle,
3 but the poor man had nothing except one small ewe lamb that he had bought. He raised it, and it grew up with him and his children. It shared his food and drank from his cup; it slept in his arms and was like a daughter to him.

4 Now a traveler came to the rich man, who refrained from taking one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare for the traveler who had come to him. Instead, he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for his guest."

5 David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan: "As surely as the LORD lives, the man who did this deserves to die!
6 Because he has done this thing and has shown no pity, he must pay for the lamb four times over."

7 Then Nathan said to David, "You are that man! This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul.
8 I gave your master's house to you and your master's wives into your arms. I gave you the house of Israel and Judah, and if that was not enough, I would have given you even more.

9 Why then have you despised the command of the LORD by doing evil in His sight? You put Uriah the Hittite to the sword and took his wife as your own, for you have slain him with the sword of the Ammonites.
10 Now, therefore, the sword will never depart from your house, because you have despised Me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own.'
(2 Samuel 12:1-10)

In this section we are addressing the challenge of how we can understand the parables Jesus uses. Who are the main characters in a parable? Do the parables have a single lesson, or more?

To understand a parable, we need to identify who the main character(s) are. The above segment, recounts a parable the prophet Nathan speaks to King David, after having committed adultery with another man's wife (Bathsheba) and the subsequent murder of her husband Uriah, as the king tries to cover up his affair (having gotten Bathsheba pregnant). This is a decisive turning point in David's life, and even though he does repent, following Nathan's confrontation, disaster follows disaster in the king's life. While the results of his sin remain, upon repenting, God does forgive and restore David, which underscores God's grace and eternal promise of loving-kindness to him. (26)

This background helps us understand Nathan's parable better. One of the main characters in the parable, thus, is the rich man (David) who acted

in treachery and without compassion. His taking of the poor man's lamb, represents his act of adultery with Bathsheba (the lamb) and the poor man stands for her husband, Uriah, the Hittite. Note, that these events are the basis for Psalm 51, a Psalm of David. As such, the parable - a 'Judicial Parable' - is designed, so that David passes judgment on himself, which he does (v.5-6). (27) In this example, we see how an Old Testament parable uses a story with familiar human characters to reveal truth, previously undisclosed. (28)

This brings us back to the parables of Jesus. In Matthew 13:1-52 we find a set of eight parables of our Lord, of which most are very similar in form to the aforementioned Old Testament parable. (29) Thus, there can be one or more main characters in a parable, which stand for someone or something, pointing to a spiritual reality. On this note, in the parable of 'The Lost Son,' (Luke 15:11-32), the Father represents God (Jesus Christ), the younger son represents sinners who need to repent, and the older son represents many of the Pharisees, who are envious and unrepentant. (30)

Let us now look at the other question, that is: Do the parables have a single lesson or more? For a long time it has been held that a parable of Jesus had exactly one single lesson. The reason for this is that in church history, the parables have been interpreted allegorically, which means that, supposedly, every single detail in them has a specific meaning. However, at this time, many hold that there can be more than one single lesson, and not every detail has to stand for something. That way, it is possible not to 'over-allegorize' a parable. As an example, in the parable of the 'Lost Son,' one theme is the lesson of God's grace of forgiveness towards repentant sinners, in line with Jesus' ministry of gracious mercy to 'the lost.' At the same time, there is a subtheme in the parable, represented by the older son, which is the refusal of the religious rulers of the time (many Pharisees) to welcome sinners, the way our Lord does. (31)

In summary, wherever parables are the subject, it is primarily the parables of Jesus Christ that come to mind. (32) As we had seen in the Old Testament example of a parable Nathan uses to confront King David, there are usually more than one (main) character(s) in a parable. Likewise, as seen in Jesus' parables there can be more than (exactly) one single lesson. Keeping this in mind, we have a basic foundation, as to how we can approach and understand the parables. We will expand upon this further in the next section, that deals with the main themes in our Lord's parables.

What are the Main Themes in the Parables?

Having considered how we can understand the parables main character and lesson(s) they contain - we now turn to how we can approach the main theme(s) found in the parables. Here, we want to consider a model that is, not only Bible-based and Christ-centred, i.e. does not challenge the

truth of Scripture in any way (each and every word in the Gospels, Jesus speaks is His words, that is, they are all authentic, including His parables), but is also helpful as a tool to better understand the parables along with everything else our Lord did and taught.

The basic premise is that in each of His parables Jesus makes one main point for every main character. (33) Following this approach for the three Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) - the fourth, the Gospel of John does not include any parables - Jesus structured them in three different ways. First, most of His parables are structured in a triangular way which means, there are three main characters (or groups of characters) and a relationship of some kind between them. Here, there is a main figure of authority (a king, a father, farmer, shepherd, etc.) relating to two or more unlike (Luke 15:11-32) subordinate pairs (sons, tenants, good and bad servants, etc.) The 'Prodigal Son' comes to mind (with two sons and their father), as does the 'Parable of the Talents (Minas)' (Matthew 25:14-30) (with a master, two faithful servants, and one wicked servant). (34)

These triangular (triadic) parables can be divided into single three-point and complex three-point parables. The latter differs from the former in that more than three characters appear, but the structure is similar to the simple three-point parables. Two-point and one-point parables have less main characters, and accordingly there are only two (or one) instead of three main points. (35) For a basic overview of these kinds of parables, see Chart B. As to how the main characters of these kinds of parables relate their main points and reveal their themes, see Chart C. (36)

Given the aforementioned approach, we find that there are many different themes in the parables (see Chart C). Jesus' parables cover a range of themes, such as those relating to the kingdom of God ('Kingdom of heaven'), God's character - primarily God's grace, God's work and God's plan of salvation (37) - manifested in the call to repentance by our Lord Jesus Christ, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near." (Matthew 4:17). This theme - the gospel of the kingdom of God (not to be confused with the literary term, the Gospels) - is the same that is used by John the Baptist (Matthew 3:1-2), and then by Jesus announcing the breakthrough of God's Kingdom. (38)

As we had seen in the Old Testament example of a 'judicial parable' which Nathan uses in confronting King David, rabbinic parables, in general describe the Mosaic Law. By contrast, while not apocalyptic, Jesus' parables are foremost thematically eschatological, relating to the final judgement. (39)

As it stands, the parables Jesus uses are essential to His entire ministry. They are used to point back to Himself, that is His Messianic mission. The themes we find in the parables cannot be separated from Christ and His uncompromising call to respond to Himself and the kingdom of God. (40)

How have the Parables been interpreted in Church History?

In this section we are considering how the parables have been interpreted throughout church history. The goal is to give an understanding of other ways our Lord's parables have been interpreted.

The interpretation of the parables throughout church history is closely connected to the way the Bible itself has been interpreted. As such, we are only considering here the most notable developments: we are looking at the Early Church Period - "The Patristic Period" (ca. AD 100-590), the Middle Ages (ca. AD 590-1500), and the Reformation (ca. AD 1500-1650) which also had many subdivisions in time. (41)

Christian interpretation of the Bible in the Early Church attempted to find a spiritual, or 'hidden' deeper meaning behind the biblical text. It is here, that Origen (ca. AD 185-254) under the influence of ancient Greek philosopher Plato, formulated three possible meanings (or 'senses') of a text: that is a literal, moral and spiritual sense (allegory being part of the spiritual sense). (42) Attributed to John Cassian (ca. AD 360-435) is his division of Origen's spiritual meaning into the allegorical and the anagogical sense, thereby creating a forth level of interpretation. (43)

Then, in the Middle Ages, there are different developments of interpretation, often undertaken by Medieval monks who placed emphasis on the allegorical approach. Every biblical passage was thought to contain four meanings, or four senses, that is a literal (or historical) sense, an allegorical (or doctrinal) sense, a moral (or tropological) sense and anagogical (or eschatological) sense. To illustrate this, we may think about the Israelites crossing of the Red Sea as:

Literal: the genuine event of the crossing of the Israelites led by Moses

Allegorical: the baptism and new life of believers in Christ.

Moral: obedient believers crossing from the challenges of life to earthly blessings.

Anagogical: the final crossing of believers from death to life eternal. (44)

Moving into the Reformation period, while not always straightforward, the fourfold sense of interpreting the Bible continued. (45) However, while an allegorical element of interpreting Scripture remained, there was a shift to placing an emphasis on the 'literal sense.' Coupled with this shift, is the challenge to interpretative authority.

It is here that Martin Luther and the other Reformers read Scripture in accordance with itself as having divine authority, breaking with previous church tradition and clashing with Roman Catholicism. (46) Hereby, Luther underscored the literal (historical) meaning of the Bible, placing it above the allegorical meaning. The original historical context of a biblical passage provides the best interpretation of Scripture, based on the principle of Scripture alone (*Sola Scriptura*). (47)

Based on the foregoing considerations of how the Bible was interpreted throughout church history, at specific times, here are some examples (48) of how the parables were interpreted using the Parable of The Good Samaritan (49):

The first example from the early church of interpreting a parable comes from Clement of Alexandria (ca. AD 150 - ca. 215):

Good Samaritan = Neighbor = Christ
Thieves = Rulers of darkness
Wounds = Fears, lusts, wraths, pains, deceits, pleasures
Wine = Blood of David's vine
Oil = Compassion of the Father
Binding [of health and of salvation] = Love, faith, hope

The second example is Origen (ca. AD 184 - ca. 254):

The man going down to Jericho = Adam
Jerusalem from which he was going = Paradise
Jericho = The word
Robbers = Hostile influences and enemies of man such as the thieves and murderers mentioned in John 10:8
Wounds = Disobedience or sins
Priest = Law
Levite = Prophets
Good Samaritan = Christ
Beast = Body of Christ
Inn = Church
Two denarii = Knowledge of the Father and the Son
Innkeeper = Angels in charge of the church
Return of the Good Samaritan = Second coming of Christ

The third example is Augustine (ca. AD 354-430):

The man going down to Jericho = Adam
Jerusalem from which he was going = City of Heavenly Peace
Jericho = The moon which signifies our mortality (there is a play here on the Hebrew terms for moon and Jericho)
Robbers = Devil and his angels
Stripping him = Taking away his immortality
Beating him = Persuading him to sin

Leaving him half dead = Due to sin, he was dead spiritually, but half alive, due to his knowledge of God
Priest = Priesthood of the Old Testament (Law)
Levite = Ministry of the Old Testament (Prophets)
Good Samaritan = Christ
Binding of the wounds = Restraint of sin
Oil = Comfort of good hope
Wine = Exhortation to spirited work
Beast = Body of Christ
Inn = Church
Two denarii = Two commandments of love
Innkeeper = Apostle Paul
Return of the Good Samaritan = Resurrection of Christ

The fourth is an example from the Middle Ages (AD 590-1500) by Bede (673-735):

The man going down to Jericho = Adam
Jerusalem from which he is going = City of Heavenly Peace
Jericho = Moon which signifies variation and change
Robbers = Devil and his angels
Stripping him = Stripping Adam of his glorious vestment of immortality and innocence
Wounds = Sins
Priest = Priesthood of the Old Testament
Levite = Ministry of the Old Testament
Samaritan = Christ
Oil = Repentance
Beast = The flesh in which the Lord came to us, i.e., the incarnation

The fifth and last is an example from the Reformation period (ca. AD 1500-1650) by Martin Luther (1483-1546):

The man going down to Jericho = Adam and all mankind
Robbers = Devils who robbed and wounded us
Priest = Fathers (Noah, Abraham) before Moses
Levite = Priesthood of the Old Testament
Good Samaritan = Lord Jesus Christ
Oil/Wine = Whole Gospel from beginning to end
Oil = Grace
Wine = Cross Christian called to bear
Beast = Christ the Lord
Inn - Christianity in world (church)
Innkeeper = Preacher of the Word of God

In sum, the foregoing considerations in interpreting the Good Samaritan show different levels of the use of allegory. As witnessed in Clement there is a strong tendency to allegorize, continuing in Origen who uses the threefold sense of interpretation, i.e. literal, moral (tropological) and spiritual sense. Allegorizing finds its climax, and becomes the dominant method of interpretation in the Early Church Period, seen in Augustine. Looking at Bede's interpretation of the parable, we move from a threefold to a fourfold sense of Scripture, i.e. literal, moral, allegorical (using a different name, than previously, which was spiritual) and anagogical (that is eschatological) meaning. Like many others in this period, Bede relies on the interpretations of the early church fathers, which is the reason for the similarity to Augustine. With Luther then, in the Reformation period, there is a shift away from the fourfold method to a literal (or single-meaning) approach. However, we do see the allegorical interpretation, in his exegesis of the Good Samaritan, over-emphasizing the doctrine of justification in faith. Other than John Calvin, there was no one as consistent as him in his exegetical work, since he refused an allegorical and Christological approach to this parable. Only until recently, do we find a more nuanced allegorical approach, such as the one used by Bloomberg, who does not try to find meaning in every single detail of a parable. (50)

How do the Parables Apply to Your Life?

> 27"My sheep listen to My voice; I know them, and they follow Me.
> 28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one can snatch them out of My hand.
> 29 My Father who has given them to Me is greater than all. No one can snatch them out of My Father's hand."
> (John 10:27-29)

In this part we want to think about how Jesus' parables apply to our lives as Christians. What can we learn from them? How can we put the lessons into practice?

As we tackle those questions, we need to remind ourselves that our Lord knows us better than we do ourselves. The above verses help us to realize that it is only n and through Jesus Christ that we can "hear" His voice as His "sheep." What that means is that any understanding of His parables, learning from them and putting them into practice, depends on Christ, not us. In other words, it is a humble, repentant, surrendered and obedient heart that Jesus is looking for, so that He can work in and through us. As believers we depend fully on Him, and listening to His voice is not only the best way to go, but it also calls us to spend as much time as possible *in* His word (the Bible). Jesus has given us His Word and He *is* the Word (John 1:1-5).

With this in mind, and, taking into account the earlier parts ('Why did Jesus use Parables?' In part three; 'How can we understand the Parables?' in part four; and 'What are the main themes in the parables?' in part five) we have a solid starting point for applying them. Here, Charts A, B and C can be used to get a basic overview of the characters, lessons and themes in Jesus' parables.

Following the aforementioned approach (in part five) - considering the 'Parable of the Sower and the Soils' again here (as rendered in Mark 4:1-9; 13-20) Jesus is teaching several practical lessons simultaneously: Christ represents the Sower; providing the message of God's Kingdom, and if (and how) the seed develops is a matter of the heart of the listener, and only those people receptive to His voice and message will produce a harvest. This requires spiritual discernment. (51)

Having revealed the purpose of His parables (Mark 4:10-12), Jesus then moves ahead to interpret the parable (Mark 4:13-20). It is here that we can discern a valuable practical application for us as Christians and especially, in our relationships to others, such as unbelievers, for example. So, the first seed that never takes root represents people who will reject Jesus' call to repentance as soon as they hear it. This is a harsh truth, and yet, it is crucial that believers understand this, so as to be discerning in terms of spiritual warfare and the influence Satan has to deceive people. (52)

The second kind of seed, reveals those who have not been transformed in Christ's likeness. When trials and persecution arise, because of Jesus, there will be people who fall away. In v.18-19 we learn about people who become distracted "by the worries of this life" and "the deceitfulness of wealth." This third group can be seen as representative of those who place their hopes in a false sense of security ("wealth") and those who succumb to the worldly concerns ("worries of this life").

It is only the last group of people who are not hardened, shallow or distracted, that is those who are open and receptive to Jesus' message of God's kingdom. These produce an unspecified fruit, yet what matters is that they *are* producing fruit, i.e. building God's kingdom. (53) The lesson(s) here are a call to follow Christ, trust Him through trials of hardship and persecution, avoid people who claim they are Christians (but whose actions speak a different truth - see Luke 7:43-45), and lastly to avoid any form of idolatry (wealth, power, influence, objects) as they listen to and follow Jesus' voice. (54)

Some Tips on Interpreting Jesus' Parables

As we conclude this article, and hope you will benefit from it, we turn to some final thoughts on how to interpret Jesus' parables. Important here is that, as seen, the parables are not allegories, and it is unwise to try to uncover hidden meaning behind every single detail. Some parables have one main point, others have more than one point. (55) In addition to this, we, as

believers have to accept and embrace the truth that Jesus' parables are designed to both conceal and reveal. In other words, there are those who are unwilling to follow Jesus, and will reject Him, along with the eternal consequences that follow. (56) This matters, since as we witness to the world as Christians (be it in evangelism, ministry or any other form of serving the Lord) we cannot change this biblical truth and spiritual reality. With that in mind, let us look at some tips on how to interpret the parables of Jesus Christ.

Steps to Interpret the Parables

1. Start with prayer. Ask Jesus to help you in the process of interpreting His word, and let the Holy Spirit guide you along the way. (Philippians 4:6-7; Romans 8:26-27)
2. Make sure you have a sound Bible translation (NASB, ESV, NKJV,BSB or paraphrase: NLT).
3. Read the selected parable several times, and write down some notes and ideas.
4. Be aware of the socio-cultural and historical context of the parable. For instance, in the 'Parable of the Persistent Widow' ('Unjust Judge') (Luke 18:1-8) it is helpful to understand that widows in Jesus' time were often vulnerable to hardship and oppression.
5. Try to find out how many points a parable is making. There may be a connection here to the number of major characters in the parable (see Chart C).
6. Who is Jesus talking to? The identity of His listeners (the crowds, the disciples, the Jewish leaders, etc.) can help reveal the intended message.
7. The pattern of repetition in parables is used to emphasize a main point. So pay attention to this pattern.
8. Determine if there is symbolism common to the Old Testament in the parable: for instance, God is often depicted as a king, judge, father, shepherd, etc.
9. Be aware of how the parable ends. The parable's significance is often found in the last deed, action, saying, or person mentioned.
10. Consult Bible-based, Christ-centered commentaries and sources only *after* you have gone through the previous steps. (57)

Notes

(1) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan,
2012., p. 160.
(2) Klein, William W., et al. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017., p. 396-397.
(3) Klein, William W., et al. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017., p. 399, 401.
(4) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011., p. 50.
(5) Barry, J.D., D. Mangum, D. R. Brown, M. S. Heiser, M. Custis, E. Ritzema, et. al. *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).
(6) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009., p. 300.
(7) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011., p. 1073.

(8) Blomberg, Craig L. *Interpreting the Parables*. 2nd ed., rev. and expanded ed. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012., p. 190.
(9) Stein, Robert H. *An Introduction to the Parables of Jesus*. 1st ed. Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1981., p. 15.
(10) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.209.
(11) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.351.
(12) Keathley IV, Hampton. "The Parables." accessed Nov 13, 2024. https://bible.org/series/parables
(13) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.355.
(14) Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007., p. 46.
(15) Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007., p. 46.
(16) Stein, Robert H. *An Introduction to the Parables of Jesus*. 1st ed. Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1981., p. 33-35.
(17) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p. 758.
(18) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p. 758.
(19) Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007., p. 48.
(20) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p. 750.
(21) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009., p. 304.
(22) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p. 756.
(23) Sproul, R. C. *What do Jesus' Parables mean?* Orlando, FL: Reformation Trust, 2017., p. 2-3.
(24) Sproul, R. C. *What do Jesus' Parables mean?* Orlando, FL: Reformation Trust, 2017., p. 3.
(25) Keathley IV, Hampton. "The Parables." accessed Nov 13, 2024. https://bible.org/series/parables
(26) Alexander, T. Desmond and Brian S. Rosner, eds. *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. Leicester: IVP Academic, 2000., p. 436-437.
(27) Walton, John H and Andrew Hill. *A Survey of the Old Testament*, 3rd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009., p. 266-267.

(28) Klein, William W., et al. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017., p. 435.
(29) Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007.. p. 46.
(30) Blomberg, Craig L. *Preaching the Parables: From Responsible Interpretation to Powerful Proclamation*. Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker Academic, 2004., p. 24.
(31) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p. 750.
(32) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011., p. 1073.
(33) Blomberg, Craig L. *Preaching the Parables: From Responsible Interpretation to Powerful Proclamation*. Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker Academic, 2004., p. 15.
(34) Blomberg, Craig L. *Preaching the Parables: From Responsible Interpretation to Powerful Proclamation*. Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker Academic, 2004., p. 15-16.
(35) Blomberg, Craig L. *Interpreting the Parables*. 2nd ed., rev. and expanded ed. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012., p. 29.
(36) Chart adapted from Blomberg, Craig L. *Interpreting the Parables*. 2nd ed., rev. and expanded ed. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012., p. 197-407.
(37) Miller, Jeffrey E. 2016. “Jesus, Parables of.” In *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, edited by John D. Barry, David Bomar, Derek R. Brown, Rachel Klippenstein, Douglas Mangum, Carrie Sinclair Wolcott, Lazarus Wentz, Elliot Ritzema, and Wendy Widder. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.
(38) Sproul, R. C. *What do Jesus' Parables mean?* Orlando, FL: Reformation Trust, 2017., p. 4-5.
(39) Kittel, Gerhard, Gerhard Friedrich, and Geoffrey William Bromiley. In *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Abridged in One Volume*, 773–76. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1985.
(40) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011., p. 1073.
(41) Klein, William W., et al. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017., p. 80-96.
(42) Hauser, Alan J. 2016. “Biblical Interpretation, History of.” In *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, edited by John D. Barry, David Bomar, Derek R. Brown, Rachel Klippenstein, Douglas Mangum, Carrie Sinclair Wolcott, Lazarus Wentz, Elliot Ritzema, and Wendy Widder. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.
(43) Bartholomew, Craig G., Daniel J. Treier, Kevin Jon Vanhoozer, and Nicholas Thomas Wright. *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005., p. 500.
(44) Klein, William W., et al. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017., p. 88-89.

(45) Blomberg, Craig L. *Interpreting the Parables*. 2nd ed., rev. and expanded ed. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012., p. 436.
(46) Bartholomew, Craig G., Daniel J. Treier, Kevin Jon Vanhoozer, and Nicholas Thomas Wright. *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005., p. 456.
(47) Klein, William W., et al. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017., p. 93.
(48) Stein, Robert H. *An Introduction to the Parables of Jesus*. 1st ed. Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1981., p. 44-49.
(49) Stein, Robert H. *An Introduction to the Parables of Jesus*. 1st ed. Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1981., p. 44-52.
(50) Blomberg, Craig L. *Interpreting the Parables*. 2nd ed., rev. and expanded ed. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012., p. 79.
(51) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p. 753.
(52) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p. 757.
(53) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p. 758.
(54) See references (for further study) at end for additional resources which can help with practical application of Jesus' parables.
(55) Sproul, R. C. *What do Jesus' Parables mean?* Orlando, FL: Reformation Trust, 2017., p. 3.
(56) Blomberg, Craig L. *Preaching the Parables: From Responsible Interpretation to Powerful Proclamation*. Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker Academic, 2004., p. 24.
(57) Adapted from Seal, David. 2016. "Parable." In *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, edited by John D. Barry, David Bomar, Derek R. Brown, Rachel Klippenstein, Douglas Mangum, Carrie Sinclair Wolcott, Lazarus Wentz, Elliot Ritzema, and Wendy Widder. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

Bibliography

Alexander, T. Desmond and Brian S. Rosner, eds. *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. Leicester: IVP Academic, 2000.

Barry, J.D., D. Mangum, D. R. Brown, M. S. Heiser, M. Custis, E. Ritzema, et. al. *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

Bartholomew, Craig G., Daniel J. Treier, Kevin Jon Vanhoozer, and Nicholas Thomas Wright. *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005.

Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007.

Blomberg, Craig L. *Interpreting the Parables*. 2nd ed., rev. and expanded ed. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012.

Blomberg, Craig L. *Preaching the Parables: From Responsible Interpretation to Powerful Proclamation*. Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker Academic, 2004.

Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009.

Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011.

Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan,
2012.

Hauser, Alan J. 2016. “Biblical Interpretation, History of.” In *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, edited by John D. Barry, David Bomar, Derek R. Brown, Rachel Klippenstein, Douglas Mangum, Carrie Sinclair Wolcott, Lazarus Wentz, Elliot Ritzema, and Wendy Widder. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

Keathley IV, Hampton. “The Parables.” accessed Nov 13, 2024. https://bible.org/series/parables

Kittel, Gerhard, Gerhard Friedrich, and Geoffrey William Bromiley. In *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Abridged in One Volume*, 773–76. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1985.

Klein, William W., et al. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017.

Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.

Miller, Jeffrey E. 2016. "Jesus, Parables of." In *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, edited by John D. Barry, David Bomar, Derek R. Brown, Rachel Klippenstein, Douglas Mangum, Carrie Sinclair Wolcott, Lazarus Wentz, Elliot Ritzema, and Wendy Widder. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

Seal, David. 2016. "Parable." In *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, edited by John D. Barry, David Bomar, Derek R. Brown, Rachel Klippenstein, Douglas Mangum, Carrie Sinclair Wolcott, Lazarus Wentz, Elliot Ritzema, and Wendy Widder. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

Sproul, R. C. *What do Jesus' Parables mean?* Orlando, FL: Reformation Trust, 2017.

Stein, Robert H. *An Introduction to the Parables of Jesus*. 1st ed. Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1981.

Walton, John H and Andrew Hill. *A Survey of the Old Testament*, 3rd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009.

For further study

Bailey, Kenneth E. *Poet & Peasant; and, Through Peasant Eyes: a Literary-Cultural*
Approach to the Parables in Luke. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983.

Blomberg, Craig L. *Interpreting the Parables*. 2nd ed., rev. and expanded ed. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012.

Blomberg, Craig L. *Preaching the Parables: From Responsible Interpretation to Powerful Proclamation*. Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker Academic, 2004.

Keathley IV, Hampton. "The Parables." accessed Nov 13, 2024. https://bible.org/series/parables

Stein, Robert H. *An Introduction to the Parables of Jesus*. 1st ed. Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1981.

Stein, Robert H. "The Parables of Jesus in Recent Study," in Word & World 5/3 (1985) Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN.

https://wordandworld.luthersem.edu/wp-content/uploads/pdfs/5-3_Imagination/The%20Parables%20of%20Jesus%20in%20Recent%20Study.pdf

Sproul, R. C. *What do Jesus' Parables mean?* Orlando, FL: Reformation Trust, 2017.

Jesus' Parables (Charts)

CHART A			
PARABLES OF JESUS			
PARABLE	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE
The Lesson of the Lamp	5:14-15	**4:21-22**	8:16; 11:33
The House on the Rock (Wise and Foolish Builders)	**7:24-27**		6:47-49
The Patches	9:16	2:21	**5:36**
The Wine and the Wineskins	9:17	2:22	**5:37-38**
The Sower and the Soils	**13:3-8, 18-23**	4:3-8, 14-20	8:5-8, 11-15
The Wheat and the Weeds	**13:24-30, 36-43**		
The Mustard Seed	**13:31-32**	4:30-32	13:18-19
The Yeast	**13:33**		13:20-21
The Hidden Treasure	**13:44**		
The Valuable Pearl	**13:45-46**		
The Net	**13:47-50**		
The Homeowner	**13:52**		
The Lost Sheep	18:12-14		**15:3-7**
The Unforgiving Servant	**18:23-35**		
The Vineyard Workers	**20:1-16**		
The Two Sons	**21:28-32**		
The Wicked Tenants	**21:33-44**	12:1-11	20:9-18
The Wedding	**22:2-14**		

Banquet			
The Lessons of the Fig Tree	**24:32-35**	13:28-29	21:29-31
The Faithful and Wise Servant	**24:45-51**		12:42-48
The Ten Virgins	**25:1-13**		
The Talents (Minas)	**25:14-30**		19:12-27
The Sheep and the Goats	**25:31-46**		
The Seed Growing Secretly		**4:26-29**	
The Watchful Servants		**13:35-37**	12:35-40
The Money Lender			**7:41-43**
The Good Samaritan			**10:30-37**
The Friend at Midnight			**11:5-8**
The Rich Fool			**12:16-21**
The Unfruitful Fig Tree			**13:6-9**
The Guests at the Feast			**14:7-14**
The Great Banquet			**14:16-24**
The Cost of Discipleship			**14:28-33**
The Lost Coin			**15:8-10**
The Lost Son			**15:11-32**
The Shrewd Manager (‘Unjust Steward’)			**16:1-8**
The Rich Man and Lazarus			**16:19-31**
The Unworthy Servant			**17:7-10**
The Persistent Widow (‘Unjust Judge’)			**18:2-8**
The Pharisee and the Tax Collector			**18:10-14**

CHART B		
PARABLES OF JESUS		
	TITLE	BIBLE VERSE(S)
SIMPLE THREE POINT		
	The Lost Son	Luke 15:11-32
	The Lost Sheep/The Lost Coin	Luke 15:4-7/Luke 15:8-10
	The Money Lender	Luke 7:41-43
	The Two Sons	Matthew 21:28-32
	The Faithful and Wise Servant	Matthew 24:45-51
	The Ten Virgins	Matthew 25:1-13
	The Wheat and the Weeds	Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43
	The Net	Matthew 13:47-50
	The Rich Man and Lazarus	Luke 16:19-31
	The Watchful Servants	Mark 13:35-37
COMPLEX THREE POINT		
	The Talents (Minas)	Matthew 25:14-30
	The Vineyard Workers	Matthew 20:1-16
	The Sower and the Soils	Matthew 13:3-8, 18-23; *Mark 4:3-9, 13-20*
	The Good Samaritan	Luke 10:30-37
	The Great Banquet	Luke 14:16-24
	The Unforgiving Servant	Matthew 18:23-34
	The Shrewd Manager (‘Unjust Steward’)	Luke 16:1-8
	The Wicked Tenants	Matthew 21:33-44 *Mark 12:1-11*
	The Wedding Banquet	Matthew 22:2-14
	The Guests at the Feast	Luke 14:7-14
TWO POINT		
	The Pharisee and the Tax Collector	Luke 18:10-14
	The Home on the Rock (Wise and Foolish Builders)	Matthew 7:24-27
	The Unworthy Servant	Luke 17:7-10
	The Seed Growing Secretly	Mark 4:26-29

	The Rich Fool	Luke 12:16-21
	The Unfruitful Fig Tree	Luke 13:6-9
	The Persistent Widow (‘Unjust Judge’)	Luke 18:2-8
	The Friend at Midnight	Luke 11:5-8
ONE POINT		
	The Hidden Treasure/The Valuable Pearl	Matthew 13:44/Matthew 13:45-46
	The Cost of Discipleship	Luke 14:28-33
	The Mustard Seed/The Yeast	Matthew 13:31-32/Matthew 13:33; *Luke 13:18-21*
OTHER		
	The Sheep and the Goats	Matthew 25:31-46
	The Homeowner	Matthew 13:52
ADDITIONAL PARABLES		
	The Patches	Luke 5:36
	The Wine and the Wineskins	Luke 5:37-39
	The Lesson of the Lamp	Mark 4:21-22
	The Lesson of the Fig Tree	Matthew 24:32-35

CHART C - (Page 1)			
PARABLES OF JESUS			
TITLE	MAIN CHARACTERS	MAIN POINTS	THEMES
The Lost Son	Father, Prodigal Son, Older Brother	1 - Like Prodigal, all sinners are called to God. 2 - God offers forgiveness to all people. 3 - Unlike the older brother, believers should always rejoice (and not begrudge) at God's grace toward the repentant.	Repentance; forgiveness, grace.
The Lost Sheep/The Lost Coin	Shepherd, lost sheep, 99 sheep/woman, lost coin, 9 coins	1 - Like the shepherd and woman, God goes to great lengths to save lost sinners. 2 - Finding the lost causes great joy in heaven. 3 - Just as the security of the 99 sheep and 9 coins is not an excuse to search for that which is lost, so Christians should never be content, not to reach out to the lost.	God seeks and saves lost sinners; salvation causes heaven to rejoice; Believers are always called to minister to the lost continually.
The Money Lender	Money lender, debtor forgiven more, debtor forgiven less.	1 - Like man forgiven less, we are not to take our spiritual forgiveness for granted. 2 - Like man forgiven more, we are to be grateful for Jesus' love and forgiveness towards us.	God's grace; love; forgiveness; gratitude; God does not play favourites.

		3 - Like the money lender, God forgives sinners of both groups, so they can start over with a fresh slate.	
CHART C - (Page 2)			
PARABLES OF JESUS			
TITLE	MAIN CHARACTER	MAIN POINTS	THEME
The Two Sons	Father, son who refused but went, son who promised but didn't go.	1 - God commands us all to do his will, like the father calling his sons to work. 2 - While some promise obedience, but do not carry it out, these are like the son who disobeyed in the end. 3 - While some are initially rebellious, they later obey and do God's will, like the son who obeyed in the end.	God's call; genuine repentance; obedience; disobedience; 'nominal' Christians do not do God's will; 'true' Christians, often reluctantly do God's will.
The Faithful and Wise Servant	Master, faithful servant, unfaithful servant	1 - At final judgment, God honors and punishes individuals, based on how they handled their God-given assignments. 2 - Since the final judgment could come anytime, being faithful to do God's work, demands perseverance. 3 - For those who delay	Faith, faithfulness, faithlessness, believers, unbelievers.

		their God-given work, in order to do evil, may realize it is too late for them to make good for their wrongs.	
CHART C - (Page 3)			
PARABLES OF JESUS			
TITLE	MAIN CHARACTER	MAIN POINTS	THEME
The Ten Virgins	Bridegroom, wise young women, foolish young women	1 - Jesus' Second Coming may be longer than expected, like the coming of the bridegroom. 2 - Like the wise young women, believers may encounter a longer delay than expected, which may be more difficult for a new Christian. 3 - Like the foolish young women, a person who is unprepared for Jesus' return will have no second chance when the end comes.	Jesus' Second Coming; repentance; failure to repent; being prepared; remaining watchful; reverence for God; heaven and hell.
The Wheat and the Weeds	Farmer, wheat, weeds	1 - God allows the righteous (wheat) and unrighteous (weeds) in the world to live side by side (often, hard to tell who is who) until the Second Coming of	Judgment Day; believers; unbelievers; Satan's work; heaven; hell; righteousness;

		Christ. 2 - When Christ returns the unrighteous will be sorted out, face judgment and go to hell. 3 - Upon Christ's return the righteous will be grouped together, receive reward and welcomed into God's presence in heaven.	unrighteousness; evil; eternal life; God's sovereignty.
CHART - C (Page 4)			
PARABLES OF JESUS			
TITLE	MAIN CHARACTER	MAIN POINTS	THEMES
The Net	The Net (fishermen), good fish, bad fish	1 - God is active; using the net, to judge all mankind at the end of the age. 2 - The good fish represent believers, who will continue God's work in heaven. 3 - The bad fish represent unbelievers; who will be eternally separated from God in hell.	End of the Age (Judgment Day); believers; unbelievers; heaven; hell; God's judgment.
The Rich Man and Lazarus	Abraham, Lazarus, rich man	1 - Like Lazarus, those God redeems, will enter God's presence in heaven.	Repentant people; unrepentant people; reality

		2 - Like the rich man, unrepentant people will experience eternal punishment (hell) 3 - God discloses Himself through Abraham, Moses, the prophets and here through Christ - to ensure nobody who does not do God's will - can challenge their fate before God.	of heaven; reality of hell; God's judgment; the resurrection; Christs resurrection.
CHART C - (Page 5)			
PARABLES OF JESUS			
TITLE	MAIN CHARACTER	MAIN POINTS	THEMES
The Watchful Servants	Master (man going on journey), watchful servants, servants who are not watchful.	1 - Master stands for God (Jesus Christ) who can return at any time. 2 - The watchful servants stand for those who are ready and prepared for Christ's return. 3 - Those servants who are not watchful, stand for those unprepared for Christ's return.	Christ's Return; Judgment Day; readiness; those not alert; ONLY God knows the time of Christ's return; expectation and anticipation of Christ's return; God's kingdom will come to pass (heaven).
The Talents (Minas)	Master, good servant (i.e. "the	1 - God gives all people some of His resources	The Second Coming; good

	first two servants”), evil servant.	to be good servants, like the master. 2 - Those who do God’s will (believers) will be rewarded, like the first two servants (good servants). 3 - Those who do not do God’s will (unbelievers) will be punished and eternally separated from God (in hell), like the evil servant.	stewardship; bad stewardship; heaven; hell; eternal rewards; eternal punishment; God’s sovereignty; God is just; believers; unbelievers; using spiritual gifts; not using spiritual gifts; good servants (with a heart bent towards God); evil servants (with a heart not bent towards God)
CHART C - (Page 6)			
PARABLES OF JESUS			
TITLE	MAIN CHARACTER	MAIN POINTS	THEMES
The Vineyard Workers	Master, eleventh-hour laborers, rest of laborers.	1 - All of God’s people will be dealt with fairly (as seen in the first group of laborers). 2 - God is sovereign in His free grace, and decides who will receive what (as seen in the last hired laborers). 3 - All believers are equal from God’s viewpoint, based on how He groups people together here.	God’s grace; God’s generosity; God shows no favouritism; obedience; gratitude; How God sees and rewards the work of believers; Christians are not to compare themselves with other Christians.

The Sower and the Soils	The Sower, fruitful seed, unfruitful seed (seed on path, seed among rocks, seed among thorns)	1 - God shares his word with all kinds of people, like the Sower. 2 - Similar to the three types of soil (unfruitful), people will show three kinds of (unregenerate) response: First, no response at all, due to an evil heart; second, a superficial response that only appears genuine; third, a temporary interest in the gospel that disappears, due to the unexpectedly high cost of discipleship. 3 - Believers, that is regenerate people, like the fruitful soil, are those who respond to God's Word with obedience and persevere, revealing a heart bent toward God.	God's call; Satan's work; the Gospel ('Good News'); regenerate people; unregenerate people; call to persevere; believers; unbelievers; evil hearts; hearts bent towards Christ.
CHART C - (Page 7)			
PARABLES OF JESUS			
TITLE	MAIN CHARACTERS	MAIN POINTS	THEMES
The Good Samaritan	Samaritan, man in ditch, priest/Levite.	1 - The behaviour of the priest and Levite reveals a religious appearance (legalism), but not a soft and loving heart. 2 - The behaviour of the Samaritan reveals a heart of compassion, that looks out for others in need, regardless of ethnicity	Legalism; heartless religiosity; compassion; following Jesus requires a change of heart; Jesus breaks all social conventions; loving one's

		or social differences. 3 - The man in the ditch represents anyone in need and shows that even a perceived 'enemy' is one's neighbor.	neighbor is a matter of heart; God's love (agape) is directed towards all people.
The Great Banquet	Banquet giver, replacement guests, those invited who refuse to come.	1 - God is simultaneously gracious and sincere, extending His invitation for all people to join the banquet He gives - yet, at the end of the age, He will judge and punish all those who refuse to come (to Christ). 2 - As we learn from those who refuse to come, there is no valid excuse. 3 - As we learn from the replacement guests, God's generosity extends all social boundaries and includes those on the fringe of society.	God's grace; judgment day; believers; unbelievers; following Jesus versus following the world; God calls outcasts; Jesus' love and call has no limits - for those who do follow Him (all that matters is that people come).
CHART C - (Page 8)			
PARABLES OF JESUS			
TITLE	MAIN CHARACTERS	MAIN POINTS	THEMES
The Unforgiving Servant	King, first servant (unforgiving), fellow servant	1 - As the king forgives the first servant, we are reminded that God's grace in forgiving sins is boundless.	God's boundless grace; forgiveness; unforgiveness

		2 - As the first servant is unforgiving toward his fellow servant, we are reminded that not forgiving others is an act of evil. 3 - As the first (unforgiving) servant finds out, there is a terrible fate for the unforgiving.	; forgiving others is *a must* not an option; Jesus' forgiveness is the standard believers are to imitate (see 'The Lord's Prayer' in Matthew 6:9-15; Luke 11:1-4) and remember Jesus' words while dying on the cross "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." (Luke 23:34)
The Shrewd Manager ('Unjust Steward')	Master, steward ('shrewd manager'), debtors	1 - All believers will have to give an account to Christ, on how they served Him. 2 - To prepare for that event, all believers are called to be shrewd in their use of resources (time, energy, finances, etc.) 3 - The reward for being shrewd - as an expression of true discipleship - is joy and spending eternity with Jesus.	God provides for us, that we may do His work; Judgment Day; accountability as a Christian; prudent (shrewd) use of resources; avoiding resources to become an idol; our true riches are in heaven; looking after others in need;

			especially fellow believers.
CHART C - (Page 9)			
PARABLES OF JESUS			
TITLE	MAIN CHARACTERS	MAIN POINTS	THEMES
The Wicked Tenants	Landlord, new tenants, original tenants, son	1 - God is patient towards his people to produce fruit, despite their hostility and rebellion towards Him. 2 - Those who have rejected God will be eternally separated on the day when God's patience runs out. 3 - God will accomplish His Sovereign goals through new and true followers, who will produce the fruit, the others failed to accomplish.	God is patient, but his patience does run out; God's people are those who do His work; God's sovereignty; believers; unbelievers; Judgment day; obedience; disobedience.
The Pharisee and the Tax Collector	The Pharisee, the tax collector	1 - Those who exalt themselves will be humbled. 2 - Those who humble themselves will be exalted.	Humility; legalism; final judgment; forgiveness; unforgiveness; repentance; unrepentant.
The House on the Rock (Wise and Foolish Builders)	Wise builders, foolish builders.	1 - An obedient response to the gospel leads to eternal salvation on Judgment day. 2 - A refusal to repent	Judgment Day; gospel; following Christ; rejecting Christ;

		and follow Christ leads to eternal damnation (hell) on Judgment Day.	heaven; hell; eternal salvation; eternal damnation; repentance; unrepentance; believers; unbelievers.
CHART C - (Page 10)			
PARABLES OF JESUS			
TITLE	MAIN CHARACTERS	MAIN POINTS	THEMES
The Unworthy Servant	Master, servant.	1 - God is sovereign in how He commands His followers to live in their circumstances. 2 - Believers must never assume that their obedience earns them His favor.	God's sovereignty; obedience; disobedience; believers must acknowledge their unworthiness before God; God's grace; God's grace cannot be earned.
The Seed Growing Secretly	Farmer, seed.	1 - God's kingdom always grows - at times, almost invisibly. 2 - God's kingdom reaches its full growth at the end of the age, immediately followed by Judgment Day.	Judgment Day; Believers are to wait patiently, expectantly and productively for Christ's Return; people are not able to control or predict God's kingdom growth; God's sovereignty; believers are

			to keep focused on the cross, not the world.
The Rich Fool	God, the rich man.	1 - A true disciple of Jesus does not accumulate wealth for selfish purposes. 2 - A true disciple is aware that earthly riches are temporal, yet heavenly riches are eternal.	True disciples; false disciples; idolatry; greed; generosity; a heart bent towards God; a heart turned away from God (those who ignore God).
CHART C - (Page 11)			
PARABLES OF JESUS			
TITLE	MAIN CHARACTER	MAIN POINTS	THEMES
The Unfruitful Fig Tree	Master, fig tree/vinedresser.	1 - Judgment is imminent on Israel's leadership (tree to be cut down) 2 - God extends His mercy for a little while longer, in the hope that the leaders will respond to Him properly (tree to be nurtured one more year).	God's mercy; God's grace; God's judgment; vineyard (as metaphor for Israel); repentance; unrepentance; heaven; hell.
The Persistent Widow ('Unjust Judge')	Judge, widow.	1 - While the timing remains unknown, God will send the Son of Man (Jesus) back to earth, in response to the cries of his people facing temporary injustice. 2 - Thus, as believers we are called to	Need for prayer; persistence; injustice; justice; pray without ceasing; faith; Christ's return; persevering

		persevere in faithful prayer for the consummation of God's kingdom.	through persecution and trials.
The Friend at Midnight	Man sleeping, friend in need of bread.	1 - Man at door teaches us as believers to be bold in our prayers before God, telling Him exactly what we need. 2 - Man awakened from sleep teaches us that God will provide for His children with overflowing generosity and willingness.	Pray without ceasing; God provides generously for the needs of His children; God rewards those who earnestly seek Him out.
CHART C - (Page 12)			
PARABLES OF JESUS			
TITLE	MAIN CHARACTER	MAIN POINTS	THEMES
The Hidden Treasure/The Valuable Pearl	Man, hidden treasure/Man, valuable pearl.	1 - God's kingdom is worth sacrificing everything for it, because of its unmatched value (Jesus compares God's kingdom to the treasure and the pearl).	God's kingdom; the unmatchable value of God's kingdom; sacrifice; Jesus is calling all people to Himself (commanding they let go of anything that might stand in the way of this priceless relationship).
The Cost of	A tower builder;	1 - People must count	Discipleship is

Discipleship	a king considering war.	the cost of following Christ (understand the cost of discipleship).	costly; following Jesus comes at a price; believers have to join in the suffering of the Messiah (i.e. being persecuted, etc.)
The Mustard Seed/The Yeast	Mustard seed/yeast	1 - While initially seeming insignificant, God's kingdom will grow significantly.	God's kingdom coming in full glory; God uses insignificant things to shame the world; people cannot fathom God's growing kingdom.

CHART C - (Page 13)			
PARABLES OF JESUS			
TITLE	MAIN CHARACTER	MAIN POINTS	THEMES
The Sheep and the Goats	King (Jesus as "Son of Man"), Sheep, Goats	1 - At the end of the age, Jesus will judge all people. 2 - Believers characterized by mercy and a heart bent towards Jesus, will live eternally in heaven with Christ. 3 - Unbelievers will be eternally separated from Jesus, cast into hell.	Christ is eternal Judge; believer; unbeliever; heaven; hell; Judgment day.

The Homeowner	Homeowner	1 - Understanding God's Word and following Jesus are what characterise a Christian.	Believers; unbelievers; discipleship; following Jesus; understanding God's Word (the Bible) is what a disciple of Christ aims for (and to help others understand and apply God's Word).
The Patches	Patch from new garment, old garment.	1 - There is a distinction between the new (i.e. God's kingdom inaugurated by Jesus) and the old (i.e. Pharisee Judaism) which is a call to fully let go of the old ways and fully embrace Christ.	Commitment to Jesus means letting go of past ways (old ways) of doing things; Christ calls for complete surrender to Him.
CHART C - (Page 14)			
PARABLES OF JESUS			
TITLE	MAIN CHARACTER	MAIN POINTS	THEMES
The Wine and the Wineskins	New wine, old wineskins, new wineskins.	1 - Jesus' calling is so radical and new, that there is no room for doing things the old way!	Jesus calls us as believers to a radical new relationship with Himself, unlike any

			other. Christians are ‘born again’ (see John 3:3-7), i.e. ‘the old has passed, the new has come.’
The Lesson of the Lamp	Lamp, lampstand.	1 - While hidden to some people, Christ will be revealed to all at His Second Coming.	Believers embrace Christ as ‘Lord of Lords’ and ‘King of Kings’ and are looking forward to His glorious return.
The Lesson of the Fig Tree	Fig tree.	1 - Christians are to be prepared for Jesus’ return, and remain prepared.	Jesus’ Return (Parousia), i.e. The Second Coming. Only God knows when Christ will return, believers are to keep watchful and vigilant.

Charts derived and adapted from Blomberg, Craig L. *Interpreting the Parables*. 2nd ed., rev. and expanded ed. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012.

Appendix

The Parables of Jesus
(Berean Standard Bible) with Jesus' words in red.

The Lesson of the Lamp
Mark 4:21-22

21 Jesus also said to them, "Does anyone bring in a lamp to put it under a basket or under a bed? Doesn't he set it on a stand? 22 For there is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed, and nothing concealed that will not be brought to light."

The House on the Rock (Wise and Foolish Builders)
Matthew 7:24-27

24 "Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 The rain fell, the torrents raged, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because its foundation was on the rock.
26 But everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. 27 The rain fell, the torrents raged, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell—and great was its collapse!"

The Patches
Luke 5:36

36 He also told them a parable: "No one tears a piece of cloth from a new garment and sews it on an old one. If he does, he will tear the new garment as well, and the patch from the new will not match the old."

The Wine and the Wineskins
Luke 5:37-38

37 "And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the new wine will burst the skins, the wine will spill, and the wineskins will be ruined.
38 Instead, new wine is poured into new wineskins. 39 And no one after drinking old wine wants new, for he says, 'The old is better.' "

The Sower and the Soils
Matthew 13:3-8, 18-23

3 And He told them many things in parables, saying, “A farmer went out to
sow his seed. 4 And as he was sowing, some seed fell along the path, and the
birds came and devoured it.
5 Some fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up
quickly because the soil was shallow. 6 But when the sun rose, the seedlings
were scorched, and they withered because they had no root.
7 Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the seedlings.
8 Still other seed fell on good soil and produced a crop—a hundredfold,
sixtyfold, or thirtyfold.”

The Sower and the Soils (explained)
Matthew 13:18-23

18 ”Consider, then, the parable of the sower: 19 When anyone hears the
message of the kingdom but does not understand it, the evil one comes and
snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the
path.
20 The seed sown on rocky ground is the one who hears the word and at
once receives it with joy. 21 But since he has no root, he remains for only a
season. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly
falls away.
22 The seed sown among the thorns is the one who hears the word, but the
worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it
becomes unfruitful.
23 But the seed sown on good soil is the one who hears the word and
understands it. He indeed bears fruit and produces a crop—a hundredfold,
sixtyfold, or thirtyfold.”

The Wheat and the Weeds
Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

24 Jesus put before them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a
man who sowed good seed in his field. 25 But while everyone was asleep, his

enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and slipped away.
26 When the wheat sprouted and bore grain, then the weeds also appeared.
27 The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good
seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?'
28 'An enemy did this,' he replied.
So the servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?'
29 'No,' he said, 'if you pull the weeds now, you might uproot the wheat with
them. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the
harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned;
then gather the wheat into my barn.' "

The Wheat and the Weeds (explained)
Matthew 13:36-43

36 Then Jesus dismissed the crowds and went into the house. His disciples
came to Him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field."
37 He replied, "The One who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. 38 The
field is the world, and the good seed represents the sons of the kingdom. The
weeds are the sons of the evil one, 39 and the enemy who sows them is the
devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.
40 As the weeds are collected and burned in the fire, so will it be at the end
of the age. 41 The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will weed
out of His kingdom every cause of sin and all who practice lawlessness.
42 And they will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be
weeping and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then the righteous will shine like the sun
in the kingdom of their Father.
He who has ears, let him hear."

The Mustard Seed
Matthew 13:31-32

31 He put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a
mustard seed that a man planted in his field. 32 Although it is the smallest of
all seeds, yet it grows into the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree,
so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches."

The Yeast
Matthew 13:33

33 He told them still another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven
that a woman took and mixed into three measures of flour, until all of it was
leavened."

The Hidden Treasure
Matthew 13:44

44 ”The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and in his joy he went and sold all he had and bought that field.”

The Valuable Pearl
Matthew 13:45-46

45 ”Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls. 46 When he found one very precious pearl, he went away and sold all he had and bought it.”
The Net
Matthew 13:47-50

47 ”Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was cast into the sea and caught all kinds of fish. 48 When it was full, the men pulled it ashore. Then they sat down and sorted the good fish into containers, but threw the bad away.
49 So will it be at the end of the age: The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous, 50 and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

The Homeowner
Matthew 13:52

52 Then He told them, “For this reason, every scribe who has been discipled in the kingdom of heaven is like a homeowner who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old.”

The Lost Sheep
Luke 15:3-7

3 Then Jesus told them this parable: 4 “What man among you, if he has a hundred sheep and loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the pasture and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it? 5 And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders, 6 comes home, and calls together his friends and neighbors to tell them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my lost sheep!’ 7 In the same way, I tell you that there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous ones who do not need to repent.”

The Unforgiving Servant
Matthew 18:23-35

23 ”Because of this, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to
settle accounts with his servants. 24 As he began the settlements, a debtor
was brought to him owing ten thousand talents. 25 Since the man was unable
to pay, the master ordered that he be sold to pay his debt, along with his
wife and children and everything he owned.
26 Then the servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Have patience with me,’ he
begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’
27 His master had compassion on him, forgave his debt, and released him.
28 But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who
owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him and began to choke him,
saying, ‘Pay back what you owe me!’
29 So his fellow servant fell down and begged him, ‘Have patience with me,
and I will pay you back.’
30 But he refused. Instead, he went and had the man thrown into prison until
he could pay his debt.
31 When his fellow servants saw what had happened, they were greatly
distressed, and they went and recounted all of this to their master.
32 Then the master summoned him and declared, ‘You wicked servant! I
forgave all your debt because you begged me. 33 Shouldn’t you have had
mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had on you?’ 34 In anger his master
turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should repay all that he
owed. 35 That is how My heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you
forgive your brother from your heart.”

The Vineyard Workers
Matthew 20:1-16

1 “For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the
morning to hire workers for his vineyard. 2 He agreed to pay them a
denarius a for the day and sent them into his vineyard.
3 About the third hour he went out and saw others standing in the
marketplace doing nothing. 4 ‘You also go into my vineyard,’ he said, ‘and I
will pay you whatever is right.’ 5 So they went.
He went out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour and did the same
thing.
6 About the eleventh hour he went out and found still others standing
around. ‘Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?’ he
asked.
7 ‘Because no one has hired us,’ they answered.
So he told them, ‘You also go into my vineyard.’

8 When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Call
the workers and pay them their wages, starting with the last ones hired and
moving on to the first.’
9 The workers who were hired about the eleventh hour came and each
received a denarius. 10 So when the original workers came, they assumed
they would receive more. But each of them also received a denarius.
11 On receiving their pay, they began to grumble against the landowner.
12 ‘These men who were hired last worked only one hour,’ they said, ‘and
you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the
scorching heat of the day.’
13 But he answered one of them, ‘Friend, I am not being unfair to you. Did
you not agree with me on one denarius? 14 Take your pay and go. I want to
give this last man the same as I gave you. 15 Do I not have the right to do as
I please with what is mine? Or are you envious because I am generous?’
16 So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

The Two Sons
Matthew 21:28-32

28 ”But what do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to
the first one and said, ‘Son, go and work today in the vineyard.’
29 ‘I will not,’ he replied. But later he changed his mind and went.
30 Then the man went to the second son and told him the same thing.
‘I will, sir,’ he said. But he did not go.
31 Which of the two did the will of his father?”
“The first,” they answered.
Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and prostitutes are
entering the kingdom of God before you. 32 For John came to you in a
righteous way and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and
prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe
him.”

The Wicked Tenants
Matthew 21:33-44

33 ”Listen to another parable: There was a landowner who planted a
vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a winepress in it, and built a tower.
Then he rented it out to some tenants and went away on a journey.
34 When the harvest time drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants to
collect his share of the fruit. 35 But the tenants seized his servants. They
beat one, killed another, and stoned a third.
36 Again, he sent other servants, more than the first group. But the tenants
did the same to them.
37 Finally, he sent his son to them. ‘They will respect my son,’ he said.
38 But when the tenants saw the son, they said to one another, ‘This is the
heir. Come, let us kill him and take his inheritance.’ 39 So they seized him
and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.
40 Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard returns, what will he do to
those tenants?”
41 “He will bring those wretches to a wretched end,” they replied, “and will
rent out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him his share of the fruit
at harvest time.”
42 Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures:
‘The stone the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone.
This is from the Lord,
and it is marvelous in our eyes’?
43 Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you
and given to a people who will produce its fruit. 44 He who falls on this stone
will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed.”

The Wedding Banquet
Matthew 22:2-14

2 “The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for
his son. 3 He sent his servants to call those he had invited to the banquet,
but they refused to come.
4 Again, he sent other servants and said, ‘Tell those who have been invited
that I have prepared my dinner. My oxen and fattened cattle have been
killed, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.’
5 But they paid no attention and went away, one to his field, another to his
business. 6 The rest seized his servants, mistreated them, and killed them.
7 The king was enraged, and he sent his troops to destroy those murderers
and burn their city. 8 Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding banquet is
ready, but those I invited were not worthy. 9 Go therefore to the crossroads
and invite to the banquet as many as you can find.’
10 So the servants went out into the streets and gathered everyone they
could find, both evil and good, and the wedding hall was filled with guests.

11 But when the king came in to see the guests, he spotted a man who was
not dressed in wedding clothes. 12 ‘Friend,’ he asked, ‘how did you get in
here without wedding clothes?’
But the man was speechless.
13 Then the king told the servants, ‘Tie him hand and foot, and throw him
into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’
14 For many are called, but few are chosen.”

The Lessons of the Fig Tree
Matthew 24:32-35

32 ”Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its branches become
tender and sprout leaves, you know that summer is near. 33 So also, when
you see all these things, you will know that He is near, right at the door.
34 Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things
have happened. 35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will never
pass away.”

The Faithful and the Wise Servant
Matthew 24:45-51

45 ”Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in
charge of his household, to give the others their food at the proper time?
46 Blessed is that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns.
47 Truly I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions.
48 But suppose that servant is wicked and says in his heart, ‘My master will
be away a long time.’ 49 And he begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat
and drink with drunkards. 50 The master of that servant will come on a day
he does not expect and at an hour he does not anticipate. 51 Then he will cut
him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be
weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

The Ten Virgins
Matthew 25:1-13

1 “At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their
lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. 2 Five of them were foolish, and
five were wise. 3 The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take along any
extra oil. 4 But the wise ones took oil in flasks along with their lamps. 5 When
the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and fell asleep.
6 At midnight the cry rang out: ‘Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet
him!’

7 Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. 8 The foolish ones
said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.’
9 ‘No,’ said the wise ones, ‘or there may not be enough for both us and you.
Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.’
10 But while they were on their way to buy it, the bridegroom arrived. Those
who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet, and the door was
shut.
11 Later the other virgins arrived and said, ‘Lord, lord, open the door for us!’
12 But he replied, ‘Truly I tell you, I do not know you.’
13 Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.”

The Talents (Minas)
Matthew 25:14-30

14 ”For it is just like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and
entrusted them with his possessions. 15 To one he gave five talents, to
another two talents, and to another one talent—each according to his own
ability. And he went on his journey.
16 The servant who had received the five talents went at once and put them
to work and gained five more. 17 Likewise, the one with the two talents
gained two more. 18 But the servant who had received the one talent went
off, dug a hole in the ground, and hid his master’s money.
19 After a long time the master of those servants returned to settle accounts
with them. 20 The servant who had received the five talents came and
presented five more. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with five talents.
See, I have gained five more.’

21 His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been
faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Enter into
the joy of your master!’
22 The servant who had received the two talents also came and said,
‘Master, you entrusted me with two talents. See, I have gained two more.’
23 His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been
faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Enter into
the joy of your master!’
24 Finally, the servant who had received the one talent came and said,
‘Master, I knew that you are a hard man, reaping where you have not sown
and gathering where you have not scattered seed. 25 So I was afraid and
went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, you have what belongs to
you.’
26 ‘You wicked, lazy servant!’ replied his master. ‘You knew that I reap where
I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed. 27 Then you
should have deposited my money with the bankers, and on my return I would
have received it back with interest.

28 Therefore take the talent from him and give it to the one who has ten talents. 29 For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. But the one who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. 30 And throw that worthless servant into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’”

The Sheep and the Goats
Matthew 25:31-46

31 ”When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, He will sit on His glorious throne. 32 All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate the people one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 He will place the sheep on His right and the goats on His left.
34 Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. 35 For I was hungry and you gave Me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave Me something to drink, I was a stranger and you took Me in, 36 I was naked and you clothed Me, I was sick and you looked after Me, I was in prison and you visited Me.’
37 Then the righteous will answer Him, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You something to drink? 38 When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? 39 When did we see You sick or in prison and visit You?’
40 And the King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of Mine, you did for Me.’
41 Then He will say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. 42 For I was hungry and you gave Me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave Me nothing to drink, 43 I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, I was naked and you did not clothe Me, I was sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.’
44 And they too will reply, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?’
45 Then the King will answer, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for Me.’
46 And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

The Seed Growing Secretly
Mark 4:26-29

26 Jesus also said, “The kingdom of God is like a man who scatters seed on the ground. 27 Night and day he sleeps and wakes, and the seed sprouts and

grows, though he knows not how. 28 All by itself the earth produces a crop—
first the stalk, then the head, then grain that ripens within. 29 And as soon as
the grain is ripe, he swings the sickle, because the harvest has come."

The Watchful Servants
Mark 13:35-37

35 "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know when the master of the
house will return—whether in the evening, at midnight, when the rooster
crows, or in the morning. 36 Otherwise, he may arrive without notice and find
you sleeping. 37 And what I say to you, I say to everyone: Keep watch!"

The Money Lender
Luke 7:41-43

41 "Two men were debtors to a certain moneylender. One owed him five
hundred denarii, and the other fifty. 42 When they were unable to repay him,
he forgave both of them. Which one, then, will love him more?"
43 "I suppose the one who was forgiven more," Simon replied.
"You have judged correctly," Jesus said.

The Good Samaritan
Luke 10:30-37

30 Jesus took up this question and said, "A man was going down from
Jerusalem to Jericho when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped
him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead.
31 Now by chance a priest was going down the same road, but when he saw
him, he passed by on the other side.
32 So too, when a Levite came to that spot and saw him, he passed by on the
other side.
33 But when a Samaritan on a journey came upon him, he looked at him and
had compassion. 34 He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil
and wine. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and
took care of him.
35 The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper.
'Take care of him,' he said, 'and on my return I will repay you for any
additional expense.'
36 Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into
the hands of robbers?"
37 "The one who showed him mercy," replied the expert in the law.
Then Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

The Friend at Midnight
Luke 11:5-8

5 Then Jesus said to them, “Suppose one of you goes to his friend at
midnight and says, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, 6 because a friend
of mine has come to me on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him.’
7 And suppose the one inside answers, ‘Do not bother me. My door is already
shut, and my children and I are in bed. I cannot get up to give you anything.’
8 I tell you, even though he will not get up to provide for him because of his
friendship, yet because of the man’s persistence, he will get up and give him
as much as he needs.”

The Rich Fool
Luke 12:16-21

16 Then He told them a parable: “The ground of a certain rich man produced
an abundance. 17 So he thought to himself, ‘What shall I do, since I have
nowhere to store my crops?’ 18 Then he said, ‘This is what I will do: I will tear
down my barns and will build bigger ones, and there I will store up all my
grain and my goods. 19 Then I will say to myself, “You have plenty of good
things laid up for many years. Take it easy. Eat, drink, and be merry!” ’
20 But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life will be required of
you. Then who will own what you have accumulated?’
21 This is how it will be for anyone who stores up treasure for himself but is
not rich toward God.”

The Unfruitful Fig Tree
Luke 13:6-9

6 Then Jesus told this parable: “A man had a fig tree that was planted in his
vineyard. He went to look for fruit on it, but did not find any. 7 So he said to
the keeper of the vineyard, ‘Look, for the past three years I have come to
search for fruit on this fig tree and haven’t found any. Therefore cut it
down! Why should it use up the soil?’
8 ‘Sir,’ the man replied, ‘leave it alone again this year, until I dig around it
and fertilize it. 9 If it bears fruit next year, fine. But if not, you can cut it
down.’ ”

The Guests at the Feast

Luke 14:7-14

7 When Jesus noticed how the guests chose the places of honor, He told
them a parable: 8 “When you are invited to a wedding banquet, do not sit in
the place of honor, in case someone more distinguished than you has been
invited. 9 Then the host who invited both of you will come and tell you, ‘Give
this man your seat.’ And in humiliation, you will have to take the last place.
10 But when you are invited, go and sit in the last place, so that your host
will come and tell you, ‘Friend, move up to a better place.’ Then you will be
honored in front of everyone at the table with you. 11 For everyone who
exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be
exalted.”
12 Then Jesus said to the man who had invited Him, “When you host a dinner
or a banquet, do not invite your friends or brothers or relatives or rich
neighbors. Otherwise, they may invite you in return, and you will be repaid.
13 But when you host a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and
the blind, 14 and you will be blessed. Since they cannot repay you, you will
be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”

The Great Banquet
Luke 14:16-24

16 But Jesus replied, “A certain man prepared a great banquet and invited
many guests. 17 When it was time for the banquet, he sent his servant to tell
those who had been invited, ‘Come, for everything is now ready.’
18 But one after another they all began to make excuses. The first one said,
‘I have bought a field, and I need to go see it. Please excuse me.’
19 Another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them
out. Please excuse me.’
20 Still another said, ‘I have married a wife, so I cannot come.’
21 The servant returned and reported all this to his master. Then the owner
of the house became angry and said to his servant, ‘Go out quickly into the
streets and alleys of the city, and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind,
and the lame.’
22 ‘Sir,’ the servant replied, ‘what you ordered has been done, and there is
still room.’
23 So the master told his servant, ‘Go out to the highways and hedges and
compel them to come in, so that my house will be full. 24 For I tell you, not
one of those men who were invited will taste my banquet.’ ”

The Cost of Discipleship
Luke 14:28-33

28 ”Which of you, wishing to build a tower, does not first sit down and count
the cost to see if he has the resources to complete it? 29 Otherwise, if he lays
the foundation and is unable to finish the work, everyone who sees it will
ridicule him, 30 saying, ‘This man could not finish what he started to build.’
31 Or what king on his way to war with another king will not first sit down
and consider whether he can engage with ten thousand men the one coming
against him with twenty thousand? 32 And if he is unable, he will send a
delegation while the other king is still far off, to ask for terms of peace.
33 In the same way, any one of you who does not give up everything he has
cannot be My disciple.”

The Lost Coin
Luke 15:8-10

8 ”Or what woman who has ten silver coins and loses one of them does not
light a lamp, sweep her house, and search carefully until she finds it? 9 And
when she finds it, she calls together her friends and neighbors to say,
‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my lost coin.’ 10 In the same way, I tell
you, there is joy in the presence of God’s angels over one sinner who
repents.”

The Lost Son
Luke 15:11-32

11 Then Jesus said, “There was a man who had two sons. 12 The younger son
said to him, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate.’ So he divided his
property between them.
13 After a few days, the younger son got everything together and journeyed
to a distant country, where he squandered his wealth in wild living.
14 After he had spent all he had, a severe famine swept through that
country, and he began to be in need. 15 So he went and hired himself out to
a citizen of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed the pigs. 16 He
longed to fill his belly with the pods the pigs were eating, but no one would
give him a thing.
17 Finally he came to his senses and said, ‘How many of my father’s hired
servants have plenty of food? But here I am, starving to death! 18 I will get
up and go back to my father and say to him, “Father, I have sinned against
heaven and against you. 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son.
Make me like one of your hired servants.” ’
20 So he got up and went to his father. But while he was still in the distance,
his father saw him and was filled with compassion. He ran to his son,
embraced him, and kissed him.
21 The son declared, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I
am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

22 But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it
on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. 23 Bring the fattened
calf and kill it. Let us feast and celebrate. 24 For this son of mine was dead
and is alive again! He was lost and is found!’ So they began to celebrate.
25 Meanwhile the older son was in the field, and as he approached the
house, he heard music and dancing. 26 So he called one of the servants and
asked what was going on.
27 ‘Your brother has returned,’ he said, ‘and your father has killed the
fattened calf, because he has him back safe and sound.’
28 The older son became angry and refused to go in. So his father came out
and pleaded with him.
29 But he answered his father, ‘Look, all these years I have served you and
never disobeyed a commandment of yours. Yet you never gave me even a
young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. 30 But when this son of
yours returns from squandering your wealth with prostitutes, you kill the
fattened calf for him!’
31 ‘Son, you are always with me,’ the father said, ‘and all that is mine is
yours. 32 But it was fitting to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of
yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ ”

The Shrewd Manager (‘Unjust Steward’)
Luke 16:1-8

1 Jesus also said to His disciples, “There was a rich man whose manager was
accused of wasting his possessions. 2 So he called him in to ask, ‘What is this
I hear about you? Turn in an account of your management, for you cannot be
manager any longer.’
3 The manager said to himself, ‘What shall I do, now that my master is taking
away my position? I am too weak to dig and too ashamed to beg. 4 I know
what I will do, so that after my removal from management, people will
welcome me into their homes.’
5 And he called in each one of his master’s debtors. ‘How much do you owe
my master?’ he asked the first.
6 ‘A hundred measures of olive oil,’ he answered.
‘Take your bill,’ said the manager. ‘Sit down quickly, and write fifty.’
7 Then he asked another, ‘And how much do you owe?’
‘A hundred measures of wheat,’ he replied.
‘Take your bill and write eighty,’ he told him.
8 The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted
shrewdly. For the sons of this age are more shrewd in dealing with their own
kind than are the sons of light.”

The Rich Man and Lazarus
Luke 16:19-31

19 ”Now there was a rich man dressed in purple and fine linen, who lived
each day in joyous splendor. 20 And a beggar named Lazarus lay at his gate,
covered with sores 21 and longing to be fed with the crumbs that fell from
the rich man’s table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.
22 One day the beggar died and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s
side. And the rich man also died and was buried. 23 In Hades, where he was
in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham from afar, with Lazarus by his
side.
24 So he cried out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus to
dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue. For I am in agony in this
fire.’
25 But Abraham answered, ‘Child, remember that during your lifetime you
received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things. But now he is
comforted here, while you are in agony. 26 And besides all this, a great
chasm has been fixed between us and you, so that even those who wish
cannot cross from here to you, nor can anyone cross from there to us.’
27 ‘Then I beg you, father,’ he said, ‘send Lazarus to my father’s house,
28 for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also end
up in this place of torment.’
29 But Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the prophets; let your
brothers listen to them.’
30 ‘No, father Abraham,’ he said, ‘but if someone is sent to them from the
dead, they will repent.’
31 Then Abraham said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the
prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.’ ”

The Unworthy Servant
Luke 17:7-10

7 ”Which of you whose servant comes in from plowing or shepherding in the
field will say to him, ‘Come at once and sit down to eat’? 8 Instead, won’t he
tell him, ‘Prepare my meal and dress yourself to serve me while I eat and
drink; and afterward you may eat and drink’? 9 Does he thank the servant
because he did what he was told? 10 So you also, when you have done
everything commanded of you, should say, ‘We are unworthy servants; we
have only done our duty.’ ”

The Persistent Widow (‘Unjust Judge’)
Luke 18:2-8

2 “In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected
men. 3 And there was a widow in that town who kept appealing to him, ‘Give
me justice against my adversary.’

4 For a while he refused, but later he said to himself, ‘Though I neither fear
God nor respect men, 5 yet because this widow keeps pestering me, I will
give her justice. Then she will stop wearing me out with her perpetual
requests.’ ”
6 And the Lord said, “Listen to the words of the unjust judge. 7 Will not God
bring about justice for His elect who cry out to Him day and night? Will He
continue to defer their help? 8 I tell you, He will promptly carry out justice on
their behalf. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on
earth?”

The Pharisee and the Tax Collector
Luke 18:10-14

10 “Two men went up to the temple to pray. One was a Pharisee and the
other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed, ‘God, I
thank You that I am not like the other men—swindlers, evildoers, adulterers—
or even like this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week and pay tithes of all that
I acquire.’
13 But the tax collector stood at a distance, unwilling even to lift up his eyes
to heaven. Instead, he beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a
sinner!’ 14 I tell you, this man, rather than the Pharisee, went home justified.
For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles
himself will be exalted.”

The Miracles of Jesus

Introduction

After Jesus had said this, He called out in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!”
The man who had been dead came out with his hands and feet bound in strips of linen, and his face wrapped in a cloth.
(John 11:43-44 BSB)

In the above verses, we see and hear Jesus Christ, through the power of His voice, bringing back to life a dead man named ‘Lazarus’ (John 11). This is one of many ‘miracles’ (or signs) Jesus did, among many others recorded in the New Testament and among those in the Old Testament. This points us to Christ’s own life, death and resurrection, an event that reveals the basis and absolute uniqueness of Christianity.

In order to assess the significance of Jesus’ miracles, the following provides a response to seven questions people often ask.

One: What is a miracle?
Two: Why did Jesus perform miracles?
Three: What kinds of miracle did Jesus do?
Four: What do Jesus’ miracles teach us?
Five: What miracles did His disciples do?
Six: What miracles continued in the Apostolic Age?
Seven: Are there miracles today?

What is a Miracle?

Men of Israel, listen to this message: Jesus of Nazareth was a man certified by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs, which God did among you through Him, as you yourselves know. He was delivered up by God's set plan and foreknowledge, and you, by the hands of the lawless, put Him to death by nailing Him to the cross. But God raised Him from the dead, releasing Him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for Him to be held in its clutches.
(Acts 2:22-24 BSB)

What is a Miracle? While it is not easy to answer this question, the Bible helps us in developing a definition. As such, a biblical miracle can be defined as "a less common kind of God's activity in which he arouses people's awe and wonder and bears witness to Himself." (1) From this perspective, a biblical miracle is not simply a spectacle, but rather a sign which tells us more about God's character as He works sovereignly through supernatural acts to reveal the arrival of His heavenly kingdom. (2) In the Old Testament (OT) miracles are often signs (Exodus 4:8; 8:23) revealing God's sovereignty and divine power at work. (3) So, as it stands, in the Bible we can identify three main periods in which miracles occurred: that is, at the time of Moses (see Chart D) and Joshua, at the time of the prophets Elijah and Elisha and at the time of Jesus Christ and the apostles. (4)

With Jesus Christ arriving on earth as 'God in the Flesh,' we discover in Scripture many 'signs,' that is miracles confirming Jesus' identity as Savior of the world, the Messiah, who leads unbelievers to faith in Him. (5) Hereby, as we learn mainly in the Gospels, there are many supernatural events visible, such as angels announcing His virgin conception and birth (Luke 1:26-38), God confirming Jesus as Messiah (Matthew 3:16-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22; John 1:29-34), the Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-8; Mark 9:2-8; Luke 9:37-43), His resurrection (Matthew 28:1-10; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-12; John 20:1-9) and His ascension into heaven (Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:6-11). (See Chart B).

While there are also some examples of 'false' signs in the Bible, which are done by evil people, whose hearts are not bent toward God, such as Pharaoh's magicians in the OT (Exodus 7:20-22; 8:6-7), Simon, the sorcerer (Acts 8:9-24) and 'Bar-Jesus,' the sorcerer (Acts 13:6-11). By contrast, 'true' signs (miracles) which are from God, are found uniquely expressed in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. In the Gospel of John, for example, we find several such signs: water changed to wine (John 2:1-11), healing the official's son (John 4:46-54), healing the invalid (John 5:1-15), feeding the multitude (John 6:5-13), walking on the water (John 6:16-21), healing the man born blind (John 9:1-7) and the raising of Lazarus (John 11:1-44). (See Chart C). These miracles Jesus did to reveal His divine glory and stimulate faith. (6)

It is foremost this last ‘sign’ Jesus performs - the raising of Lazarus - that points directly to Himself, namely His own death and resurrection. This brings us back to the Bible verse above, which is the Apostle Peter addressing the crowd after the Holy Spirit arrives at Pentecost, as Jesus had promised. It is Christ’s resurrection that is referred to by Peter in his witness and testimony about Jesus (Acts 2:22-24). Therefore, when we consider what a miracle is: it is primarily Jesus Christ Himself, coming as ‘God in the Flesh,’ dying on the cross to atone for our sins, and His resurrection, ascension and sending the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit to all believers.

Jesus’ miracles also attest and confirm God’s Word, the Bible, so just as every Word Jesus speaks, and every miracle he performs is true, these are verified by His resurrection. So, instead of unexplainable myths, or man-made stories, we are dealing here with miracles as events, incidents and facts. We are dealing with God’s self-revelation of Himself in and through Jesus Christ, that is His authenticity, reliability and absolute truth (John 14:6; 15:5); which we are looking at in more detail in the next segment.

Why did Jesus Perform Miracles?

Then John’s disciples informed him about all these things. So John called two of his disciples and sent them to ask the Lord, “Are You the One who was to come, or should we look for someone else?”
When the men came to Jesus, they said, “John the Baptist sent us to ask, ‘Are You the One who was to come, or should we look for someone else?’ ”
At that very hour Jesus healed many people of their diseases, afflictions, and evil spirits, and He gave sight to many who were blind. So He replied, “Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor. Blessed is the one who does not fall away on account of Me.”
(Luke 7:18-23 BSB)

Having established a definition for biblical miracles, we are now addressing the question: Why did Jesus perform miracles? If we understand His miracles as signs, there are several points we can make to answer this question.

First, as we consider the above verse, we see that Jesus’ miracles point to Himself (see Chart A), thereby authenticating Jesus of Nazareth as Messiah (7) and, especially, providing evidence that His message is genuine. (8)

Second, Jesus’ miracles are fulfilment of OT prophecy as we see in the Gospel of Luke where Jesus is referring to Himself from the book of the prophet Isaiah:

“The Spirit of the Lord is on Me,

because He has anointed Me
to preach good news to the poor.
He has sent Me to proclaim liberty to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to release the oppressed,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."
(Luke 4:18-19 BSB)

As such, we see not only prophecy fulfilled, but also realize there is a balance between Jesus' miracles and His teaching (His message). (9) Likewise, related to Jesus' response to John the Baptist's inquiry, we see the testimony about Christ being confirmed in Himself:

Then Jesus went back across the Jordan to the place where John had first been baptizing, and He stayed there. Many came to Him and said, "Although John never performed a sign, everything he said about this man was true." And many in that place believed in Jesus.
(John 10:40-42 BSB)

What matters here is that, not only do the miracles point to Christ, but also that the miracles in and by themselves are not what people ought to focus on; it is Jesus who we are called to seek. (10)

Third, along with the fulfillment of prophecy, comes the uniqueness of Jesus' miracles, namely the restoration of sight to the blind. This specific 'sign,' giving sight to the blind is not found anywhere in the OT. (11) At the same time, this aspect of blindness also refers to spiritual blindness, that is - unrepentant hearts and unbelief as evidenced, for example, in the healing of the blind man in John 9. Here, the Pharisees who claim to be God's representatives and spiritual leaders of the people, are actually blind, since they reject Jesus as the Messiah. (12)

They could have embraced the truth as found in Scripture, such as Psalm 146:8, "The Lord opens the eyes of the blind," (13) but they rejected the truth, along with Jesus. Their rejection echoes the woes to all unrepentant people Jesus makes (Luke 10:13) and the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit which the Pharisees commit in Luke 11, along with Jesus' woes against the Pharisees and Experts in the Law, a warning of the reality and horror of hell for all unbelievers on Judgment Day. (14)

Fourth, in addition to the healing of the blind as absolutely unique sign, Jesus points to His own identity through these miracles. Christ even tells us this Himself:

“If I am not doing the works of My Father, then do not believe Me. But if I am doing them, even though you do not believe Me, believe the works themselves, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I am in the Father.”
(John 10:37-38 BSB)

“Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me—or at least believe on account of the works themselves.”
(John 14:11 BSB)

At the very least, Jesus’ miracles are done to draw attention to Himself, and to confront people about his identity. (15) In other words, this is the main reason Jesus performs miracles. His teaching - effectively, every word He speaks - cannot be separated from doing miracles, since He has authenticated Himself as Messiah. (16)

Ultimately, the miracles, as signs and works reveal a deeper reality, which is the salvation Jesus Christ offers. (17) His salvation offer is primarily revealed in the resurrection, which He talks about as He clears the Temple:

Jesus answered, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up again.”
“This temple took forty-six years to build,” the Jews replied, “and You are going to raise it up in three days?”
But Jesus was speaking about the temple of His body. After He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this. Then they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.
(John 2:19-22 BSB)

It is here where we see the essence of Christianity, which is the *only* belief system (religion or worldview) which bases its main claim on the resurrection of its divine founder, Jesus Christ. (18)

Fifth, miracles attest to Jesus’ divine authority, as signs pointing to God’s authority and indicating a deeper reality. (19) Christ’s divine authority and lordship are confirmed in the range of His miracles, that is His complete authority over all the earth and the spiritual realm - casting out demons - and, astoundingly, even over life and death (Matthew 8:1-4, 5-13, 23-27, 28-34 and Matthew 9:18-26). (20)

Sixth, in and through Jesus and his miracles, we see the in-breaking of the kingdom of God (Matthew 4:23; 9:35). Ever since the fall of mankind (Genesis 3) Jesus’ coming on the scene, primarily shows God’s restoration of sinners to Himself. Even more so, we learn that Jesus’ first coming is restoring all things to Himself, to be completed at His Second Coming. (21)

Along with this, Jesus' ministry of word and deed is designed to draw a regenerate person to come to Him in faith and repentance. (22)

To sum up, we now have a better understanding of why Jesus performed miracles. As seen, His miracles authenticate His message, that is the message of the gospel, an aspect even some Pharisees acknowledged. (23)

Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs You are doing if God were not with him."
(John 3:1-2 BSB)

Also, OT prophecy is fulfilled, as was prophesied, for example, through Isaiah (Isaiah 29:18; 32:3; 35:5-6), uniquely in giving sight to the blind. (24) In addition, the miracles point to Christ's identity as Messiah, underscored by the revelation of His divine authority in word and deed - as manifested in His raising of Lazarus from the dead, for example, simply by using His voice, "Lazarus, come out" (John 11:43-44). Lastly we are witnessing the in-breaking of God's kingdom through Christ's miracles, which are not simply a promise, but are an actualization of God's kingdom, which will reach its climax and consummation at Christ's Second Coming. (25)

What Kinds of Miracles did Jesus Do?

Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. News about Him spread all over Syria, and people brought to Him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering acute pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed—and He healed them. The large crowds that followed Him came from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan.
(Matthew 4:23-25 BSB)

Having explored the reasons for why Jesus performed miracles, we now are investigating what *kinds* of miracles Jesus did. In order to do this, we need to consider miracles as they occurred throughout the Bible, that is miracles in the OT, miracles in the NT and then, lastly, the miracles unique to Jesus. That way we are given a better understanding of the work and mission of Jesus Christ.

The first series of miracles in the OT - that is ‘signs’ revealing God’s power - are those found in Exodus with Moses at the burning bush, the ten plagues, and the parting of the Red Sea - all related to God interceding on behalf of His people, the Israelites, freeing them from Egyptian oppression and slavery. This series continues as Joshua (having taken over leadership from Moses) leads the people to cross the Jordan, witnesses Jericho’s fall and the Battle of Gibeon. (26) Such miracles (‘signs and wonders’) point directly to Yahweh (God), which is the most important aspect about God performing them. (27)

The second series of miracles in the OT, occur in a period in which many people had turned away from God, to worship idols. As such, God revealed Himself through ‘signs’ in the ministry of Elijah and Elisha. Verifying Himself as the One and Only true God, the Lord had Elijah call down fire from heaven, in the contest against false prophets at Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:36-37). This resulted in the confirmation and restoration of true worship. (28)

Similarly, Elisha, having succeeded Elijah, performs God-given signs: such as feeding a large group of people using limited means, healing a man of leprosy (2 Kings 4:42-44; 5:1-14) - to name just a few - as manifestations of God fulfilling His Word through the prophet. (29) Notably too, is the event surrounding the floating ax head, with God working supernaturally at the command of a prophet (2 Kings 5:1-7). (30) What matters here is that God reveals Himself through this prophetic sign, authenticating Himself in the prophet’s word, serving as His divine agent. (31)

In the NT, we learn about the third series of miracles accomplished through Jesus Christ and the Apostles. We should note here, that there are parallels found in the miracles performed by Jesus in the works of Elijah and Elisha in the OT (1 and 2 Kings). (32) Since we are looking at the work of the Apostles in more detail (in a subsequent part), we are just generally mentioning in passing, that ‘signs’ here are related to supernatural events directly linked to the sharing of the ‘Good News’ (the gospel. (33)

This brings us to miracles *unique* to Jesus. In the above Bible passage (Matthew 4:23-25) we get a sense of the kinds of miracles Jesus did. What stands out is not only the kinds of miracles Christ performed, but also the sheer amount of His miracles. Considering the miracles (‘signs’) we have in the OT, we realize there is a sense of continuity in Jesus’ work, and yet, His ‘signs’ stand out for a number of reasons:

First, while Jesus never performed any miracles during His childhood or early manhood (34) living in relative obscurity - once He arrives onto the scene - His teaching and work (miracles) come to pass in an almost explosive way.

Second, His miracles are hard to grasp altogether, or even classify (see Chart A for a basic overview of Jesus’s miracles). Among the reasons for this is, that there is no clear distinction between the works He does - as Jesus heals people, casts out demons and performs nature miracles. (35)

Third, all Jesus' miracles are unique in that there is no single identical method He uses to perform them. For example, in Mark 5:1-20 Jesus' exorcism centers around a man possessed by a legion of demons. After our Lord casts them out, sending them into a herd of pigs, the pigs show suicidal behaviour in that they rush into a steep bank into the sea and drown. (36) Again, this is just one of many examples showing that Jesus is not limited in any way or method to perform His miracles.

All of this helps us understand that what is being revealed to us it is not primarily about the kinds of miracles Jesus does, but points us to their purpose. To better illustrate this we can consider the way the Gospel of John records seven 'signs' (miracles) Jesus does to help us understand His miracles. (37) (38) On the one hand, the purpose of Christ's miracles is to demonstrate Jesus' authority over everything, including life and death. (39) On the other hand, and just as important, Jesus' miracles always point back to Himself. We see this in the way John's Gospel records, Jesus' "I am" sayings as they link back to the OT in Exodus 3:14 and Isaiah's references to God's absolute uniqueness (e.g. Isaiah 41:10; 43:10; 45:18). Thus, these pointers are different ways of referring to Christ as 'God in the Flesh,' the Messiah. (40)

To sum up, Jesus' miracles are hard (if even at all possible) to classify, let alone group together. A basic approach is to look at his miracles as nature miracle, exorcism, healing - and bringing the dead back to life. Taken together, these miracles demonstrate His unique power over everything. (41)

Also, Jesus' miracles are all unique, since they do not follow an identical predictable pattern, or similar method. This is important, since Christ does not perform miracles for their own sake, but for His own glory. God's power is at work here, and the miracles, thus, serve as an irrefutable truth, namely the arrival (and coming consumation) of God's kingdom, with Jesus as 'Lord of Lords' and 'King of Kings.' (42)

Lastly, the purpose of His miracles is far more important than anything else. As seen, in the Gospel of John, the miracles are 'signs' that point back to Himself. That is, they function to reveal and help us understand the message of Jesus, which is the gospel. (43) Salvation is found only in Jesus. Hence, as we consider the opening Bible verse, we see that it is Christ who is and has given us His eternal promise through His atoning work on the cross - His death and resurrection, as well as the Holy Spirit, and His Word, that is the Bible - and everything it contains to help us grow in our personal relationship with Him: the most amazing miracle of all.

What Do Jesus' Miracles Teach Us?

Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.
(John 20:30-31 BSB)

After pondering the kinds of miracles Jesus did, we are considering here what Jesus' miracles *teach* us. This was mentioned briefly in the previous segment, since we realize that His miracles are more than just miracles for miracles' sake, but serve a more profound purpose, namely pointing to Himself as Messiah. In order to address the initial question, we are looking here at: a brief general consideration of what Jesus' miracles mean, how they reveal Jesus as 'God in the Flesh,' the work of the Holy Spirit, the fact of Christ's resurrection, that eternal salvation is through Christ only, the difference between belief (faith) vs. unbelief, and lastly, our Lord's miracles as God's grace.

First, in general - following the initial Bible passage, the main teaching or lesson for us - is, that Jesus' miracles are designed to reveal and edify, namely revealing God's plan of salvation for mankind through Christ. (44) Along with this, His miracles are manifestation of God's kingdom having arrived (45) and ultimately point to the death and resurrection of Christ. (46)

Second, the miracles show us that Jesus is 'God in the Flesh,' and as such are not mere spectacles, but rather signs pointing back to Him. (47) This is important, since Jesus claims that He is the Messiah, the 'anointed One' (Hebrew) and 'Christ' (Greek). (48) Thus, His miracles are affirmations of His divine identity and messiahship. The works of God He does, are signs that point to the truth of His identity, along with OT prophecy applied and fulfilled in Himself (Matthew 11:4-5). (49)

Third, Jesus' miracles teach us, especially in casting out demons - that the third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, is at work in Him (Luke 4:18-19). Jesus reveals the power and work of the Holy Spirit in Himself as He shows His power over the spiritual realm and surpassing the power and abilities of Satan, the devil (Luke 11:20). Worth noting here, is that Jesus promises the Holy Spirit (John 16:5-11) and after His resurrection and ascension, fulfills His promise at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4). (50)

Fourth, Christ's miracles reveal the truth and fact of the resurrection. While done in a different and often unique way, each of the four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) tell us about the events surrounding the day of Christ's resurrection. The Bible tells us that the sign (or 'miracle') of the resurrection took place 'on the third day,' following our Lord's crucifixion, what we refer to today as 'Easter Day,' just as Jesus had Himself predicted (Matthew 16:21; Mark 8:31-33; Luke 9:21-22) (51). As such, with the incarnation of Jesus Christ (conceived through the Holy Spirit) and His

resurrection from the dead, we see the most important ‘miracles’ ever recorded in the history of mankind. (52)

Fifth, what follows from Christ’s resurrection is that eternal salvation is through Jesus Christ only. Hence, considering our opening Bible verse again here (John 20:30-31), the miracles - foremost, the ‘miracle’ of our Lord’s resurrection - shows God’s provision of salvation for any believer, along with providing the adequate basis of our faith in Christ, believing in His works, as well as - especially - His words (John 6:38; 8:30). (53) Here, we are reminded by Jesus Christ Himself, as He says:

Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”
(John 14:6 BSB)

Sixth, Jesus’ miracles reveal the response of people’s hearts, that is belief (faith) vs. unbelief. So here we see - similar to His teaching - that Jesus’ miracles *provoke* both belief and unbelief. (54) Thus, when the religious leaders demand a sign (‘miracle’) from Jesus (Matthew 12:39; 16:4; Luke 11:16, 29; John 4:48) this is a form of unbelief, since there is no response to the signs Jesus has already revealed. (55) This unbelief is then expressed in it its most characteristic form, when the religious leaders, having just witnessed a miracle by Jesus, commit ‘the unpardonable sin,’ by accusing Him of casting out demons, as a result of Him apparently being possessed by Beelzebub (that is Satan) (Mark 3:22-30; Matthew 12:22-30; Luke 11:14-23). (56)

We see here the hostility towards Jesus also found in the response of His own family, since His own brothers were aware of His miracles, but did not believe in Him (John 7:3-5). (57) This is crucial for us to understand, since a life of faith in Christ leads to God’s blessing, whereas unbelief is rebellion against God, and leads to eternal separation from God (hell). (58)

This brings us to our seventh, and last point, that is Jesus’ miracles teaching us about God’s grace, as expressed through Christ Himself. As we had just seen in point six, belief (that is faith in Christ) is an outworking of understanding Christ’s miracles as acts of God’s grace. In other words, for every believer there has to be some form of transformation, or ‘circumcision of the heart,’ (Deuteronomy 10:16-17) as a result of having received God’s miracle of grace. (59) The importance of this is that believers are not to rely on miracles as such - as astonishing as they may be - but fully on God’s grace, with the Holy Spirit working in and through our hearts and lives. We see this expressed in the Bible, when Jesus sternly admonishes the people for their dependence on “signs and wonders” (John 4:46-54). (60)

In its most profound manifestation the absence of God’s grace in a person’s heart can be seen when Jesus performs the miracle of raising

Lazarus from the dead (John 11) revealing the penultimate hardness of heart of the Jewish leaders (John 12). Despite Jesus working mightily in word and deed these leaders not only reject Jesus (and thereby God's grace), but also plot and pursue to put Jesus to death on the cross. (61) Thus, miracles in and by themselves mean nothing, unless a person truly embraces God's grace, having a heart truly bent towards Jesus - and realizing the magnitude of Jesus' suffering on the cross (along with mankind's inability to save ourselves, based on our own merit - apart from God), as part of understanding Jesus as the true Messiah. (62)

To conclude, Jesus' miracles teach us many different things. As seen, they teach us that God's kingdom has been initiated (to be consummated at Jesus' Second Coming on Judgment Day) and point to our Lord's divinity as 'God in the Flesh,' revealing Him as eternal King, the Messiah. (63) In addition, along with showing us the power of the Holy Spirit at work, Jesus' miracles are neither magic, nor spectacle, but the reality of Satan's defeat (Luke 10:18) (to be finalized at the Second Coming), revealed primarily through His exorcisms and His own resurrection (64) providing a demonstration of the reality of God's earthly kingdom. (65)

As it stands, Jesus' resurrection is not only a fact, but also a stern warning to those who decide not to repent and surrender to Him (John 3:16-21). Christ's resurrection is an absolute affirmation of Jesus as God's Messiah (66) and to know that eternal salvation is *only* in and through faith in Christ. Also, His miracles are part of a Christians understanding of God's work, whereas unbelievers - often by default - deny the supernatural. (67)

Faith in Christ, is revealed not primarily in a miracle as viewed unto itself, but is seen in those who truly believe in Christ - to whom the miracle points - revealing Him as the Messiah. An example of this can be seen in Luke 18:35-43 where Jesus heals a blind beggar, who not only receives his sight, but becomes a disciple of Jesus, willing to follow Him (v. 42-43) as Christ is on His way to the cross. (68)

Finally, among the most profound lessons Jesus' miracles teach us, we see that they are signs pointing to God's grace. The raising of Lazarus is such a sign and reveals Christ's glory as sovereign Creator, as well as the ultimate authority over the material and spiritual realm, along with His unlimited grace, mercy and love for all who will ever believe in Him. (69) This brings us to the next segment in which we are investigating what miracles Jesus' disciples did and what we can learn from this.

What Miracles Did The Disciples Do?

These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: “Do not go onto the road of the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. As you go, preach this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven is near.’ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give.
Do not carry any gold or silver or copper in your belts. Take no bag for the road, or second tunic, or sandals, or staff; for the worker is worthy of his provisions.
Whatever town or village you enter, find out who is worthy there and stay at his house until you move on. As you enter the home, greet its occupants. If the home is worthy, let your peace rest on it; but if it is not, let your peace return to you. And if anyone will not welcome you or heed your words, shake the dust off your feet when you leave that home or town. Truly I tell you, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.” (Matthew 10:5-15 BSB)

****

After this, the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of Him to every town and place He was about to visit. And He told them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest.
Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. Carry no purse or bag or sandals. Do not greet anyone along the road.
Whatever house you enter, begin by saying, ‘Peace to this house.’ If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; if not, it will return to you. Stay at the same house, eating and drinking whatever you are offered. For the worker is worthy of his wages. Do not move around from house to house.
If you enter a town and they welcome you, eat whatever is set before you. Heal the sick who are there and tell them, ‘The kingdom of God is near you.’
But if you enter a town and they do not welcome you, go into the streets and declare, ‘Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off as a

testimony against you. Yet be sure of this: The kingdom of God is near.' I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town" (....)
The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in Your name."
So He told them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I have given you authority to tread on snakes and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy. Nothing will harm you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."
(Luke 10:1-12, 17-20 BSB)

Having considered what Jesus' miracles teach us, we are now looking into what miracles Jesus' disciples did and what we can learn from this.

To begin with we have to clarify what we mean by 'disciple.' In the NT, the term 'disciple' (Greek: *mathetes*) means *to learn*, so a disciple is a learner or pupil. (70) This concept of discipleship was common in Jesus's time, familiar in Judaic culture, and it was expected that a disciple was to become like his teacher both in word and deed, reflecting the teacher's character. So in the Gospels, we see two manifestations of this in the life and ministry of Jesus:

The first is the twelve disciples He selects instructing them to teach and serve (Mark 3:14) - which later, after Christ's resurrection and ascension, became His 'apostles,' minus Judas Iscariot, who had betrayed Him, along with the Apostle Paul (in the Book of Acts). The second group of disciples during Jesus' ministry refers to a broader group, of which we learn more when Jesus sends them out as the Seventy-two (Luke 10:1-12, 17-20). (71) These two groups are our focus here.

Following the initial Bible passage above - the Ministry of the Twelve (also found in Mark 6:7-13; Luke 9:1-6) we see that (at that time) Jesus expected these disciples to perform specific miracles, of which some come about, others do not, i.e. the twelve do not raise the dead, and do not cleanse lepers. What stands out here is that for the miracles they did perform, which are certainly impressive, they are linked to Christ and His message. (72)

Jesus expects these disciples to replicate His ministry, yet at the time, to stay within the confines of Israel. As such, they are God's witnesses, initiating, but not exceeding Chris's own divine authority. Being paired two by two, there is a judicial aspect to this mission, seen in their 'shaking off the dust off their feet,' for those who reject them, and thereby Christ's offer of salvation. (73) The miracles the disciples do, such as driving out demons and healing many sick people, are inseparably linked to their preaching on repentance (Mark 6:12-13). (74)

In sending out the Seventy-two, the second group of disciples - as seen in the above Scripture passage - is similar to the first group in that Jesus

expects His followers to heal the sick, along with announcing that God's kingdom is near (Luke 10:8-9). The factuality of this event and missional work of this second group is underscored by Jesus' instructions of accepting hospitality from those they encounter, an idiosyncratic Judean tradition at the time. (75)

What stands out in this account, even more so than the miracles themselves, is found in the details of the joyful return, as these disciples exclaim to Jesus: "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name" (Luke 10:17). Here (in v. 19) we are reminded that it is Christ and Him only who has power over Satan and the demonic realm. The "treading on snakes and scorpions," explains the power and protection of God *through Jesus Christ*. Likewise, the way to be humble (v. 20) shows that it is Christ's power (not mere human self-reliance) that leads to victory, and His disciples are to set their hearts and minds on the things in heaven above. (76)

To sum up, reflecting on what miracles the disciples did during Jesus' ministry, we see that there are differences between Christ's ability and work and that of the disciples (both the twelve and the seventy-two). As seen, there are some miracles, such as raising the dead (in the Gospels), was something only Jesus accomplished. Alongside His miracles such as the cleansing of lepers, and the ability and authority to forgive sins, this is singular to Christ - as the Bible records in the healing of a paralytic (Matthew 9:1-8; Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:17-26). (77)

In a similar way, there is an incident in which Christ's disciples were not able to perform a miracle, as seen in the healing of the epileptic boy (Matthew 17:14-20; Mark 9:14-29; Luke 9:37-43). What figures prominently here is *not* the disciples *inability*, but Christ's *unique authority*, pointing back to His God-given divine authority, since He does cast out the demon. (78) We learn here, that faith always has as its aim, Christ and His Kingdom, rather than doing things in our own human limitations. (79)

Furthermore, we see that Jesus' miracles and other actions, are unique signs that always point to Himself - taking children into his arms, washing the feet of the disciples and His triumphant entry into Jerusalem, for instance. (80) This becomes crucial for us to understand as we consider healing and 'miracles' in the Apostolic Age, since we must never forget that it is Jesus who empowers us, not we of ourselves. (81) In the end, what really matters for us as believers, is not miracles in and of themselves, but our gracious gift of God's salvation. (82)

We see what really matters here is not so much the miracles the disciples did, but primarily the required disposition of heart for anyone who repents and surrenders to Christ and follows Him, effectively, displaying a humble and obedient heart attitude as we read in Jesus' prayer of thanksgiving:

At that time Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and declared, "I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because You have hidden these things from

the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was well-pleasing in Your sight.
All things have been entrusted to Me by My Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him."
Then Jesus turned to the disciples and said privately, "Blessed are the eyes that see what you see. For I tell you that many prophets and kings desired to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it."
(Luke 10:21-24 BSB)

This brings us to consider the miracles we find recorded in the NT, after Jesus' resurrection and ascension, found in the Book of Acts.

What Miracles Continued in the Apostolic Age?

Men of Israel, listen to this message: Jesus of Nazareth was a man certified by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs, which God did among you through Him, as you yourselves know. He was delivered up by God's set plan and foreknowledge, and you, by the hands of the lawless, put Him to death by nailing Him to the cross. But God raised Him from the dead, releasing Him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for Him to be held in its clutches.
(Acts 2:22-24 BSB)

Having risen and ascended to heaven, in this segment we are exploring which miracles continued in the Apostolic Age.

As mentioned earlier an 'apostle' is a specific kind of disciple of Christ. The Apostles (minus Judas Iscariot) along with other disciples continued God's work as the early church begins, which we read about in the Bible, primarily in the Book of Acts. The Apostles, now including Paul, are specifically chosen by Jesus, from among all the other disciples, as "twelve apostles of the Lamb" (Revelation 21:14) distinguishing them from other believers in the early church, primarily by the unique 'signs' (miracles) they performed. (83)

So, for example, the Bible tells us that it was only the Apostle Peter (Acts 9:36-43) and the Apostle Paul (Acts 20:7-12) who brought a person back to life from the dead. (See Chart F). This specific 'sign' or miracle (not the same as the future *resurrection* of believers) was God's confirmation of their status as 'apostle,' alongside other miracles they performed in their ministry (2 Corinthians 12:12; Hebrews 2:3-4). (84) This does not mean that

miracles do not occur anymore, but it does mean that there are no longer ‘apostles’ in the sense of the aforementioned context.

What matters most here (which we are now considering) is the work of the Holy Spirit, what the miracles in the Book of Acts tell us, and how they relate to the message of the gospel.

Preceding the opening Bible verse (Acts 2:22-24) in which the Apostle Peter calls people to repentance, Scripture tells us about the arrival of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost:

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.
Suddenly a sound like a mighty rushing wind came from heaven and filled
the whole house where they were sitting. They saw tongues like flames of
fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. And they were all filled
with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit
enabled them.
Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation
under heaven. And when this sound rang out, a crowd came together in
bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking his own language.
Astounded and amazed, they asked, “Are not all these men who are speaking
Galileans? How is it then that each of us hears them in his own native
language? Parthians, Medes, and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea
and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the
parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome, both Jews and converts to
Judaism; Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in
our own tongues!”
Astounded and perplexed, they asked one another, “What does this mean?”
But others mocked them and said, “They are drunk on new wine!”
(Acts 2:1-13 BSB)

The Coming of the Holy Spirit is a unique event recorded only in the Bible - a promise Jesus makes, prior to His resurrection and ascension (John 14:16-17, 26). This event, which is a different (superior) category than miracles, is special, since it is one of the singular hallmarks of Christianity. What is happening here, the comprehension of other languages (not to be confused with ‘speaking in tongues’) marks the beginning of the apostles’ ministry on the Day of Pentecost. At the close of the Apostolic Age, and the continuation of the church age, with all NT books in circulation, this specific sign was no longer needed (since it is now recorded for us in the Bible). (85)

What matters here, is that ‘speaking in tongues’ is *not a requirement* for a person to receive salvation through Jesus Christ. Likewise, as we learn from the Apostle Peter’s response - in addition to refuting the false charge of being drunk - He explains the basic parts in the life of a converted person

(Acts 2:37-39): Repentance, being baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, having one's sins forgiven and receiving the Holy Spirit. Important here is that there is no pre-set method, nor mechanism, nor order in which the Holy Spirit is received (John 3:8). (86)

Along with the arrival of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, we learn more about the miracles as recorded in the Book of Acts. It is again the Apostle Peter (Acts 2:22; 10:38) who helps us understand what the miracles of Jesus mean, summarizing Christ's ministry, as well as the ministry of the Apostles - empowered by the Holy Spirit, they perform miracles in order to point people to Jesus Christ. (87) So, even with other disciples perform miracles, such as Stephen (Acts 6:8-15) the broader gift of miracles (1 Corinthians 12:10, 28) - such as Peter's judgment of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:9-11) as well as Paul's judgment of the false prophet Bar-Jesus (Acts 13:8-11) - are unique to the Apostolic ministry. (88) (89)

We can see here, that there is a similar confrontation between the Apostles - now empowered by the Holy Spirit - against different manifestations of evil, primarily the demonic realm, which Jesus had demonstrated in His own ministry. So, along with signs of healing (Acts 3:1-10, 10, 16; 4:8-10) and bringing people back to life from the dead (Acts 9:36-43; Acts 20:7-12) there are exorcisms evident as well (Acts 16:16-18). In this way, we see Christ's superiority over the spiritual realm, manifested in the works of the Apostles. (90)

At the same time, we realize that there are other examples of evil, such as practicing syncretism (that is, a combination of Jewish and pagan rituals with attempts to produce 'magical' signs) seen in Acts 19:13-20 in which ungodly Jewish exorcists fail at their attempt to cast out demons; significantly, though, this does not hinder the progress of the gospel, revealing the power and sovereignty of the Holy Spirit. (91)

Lastly, having a better insight in the Apostles' work, we are considering how the miracles are linked to the message of the gospel. It becomes clear that miracles and the gospel message cannot be separated, since they always point back to the cross. A good example of this is found in Acts 3:1-4:21 where the Apostle Peter shifts from the miracles of healing to declaring spiritual salvation. (92) Thus, the Apostolic ministry can be seen as an extension of Jesus' ministry in the Book of Acts, and are a unique display of God's grace evidenced in the miracles of the Apostles - they are attestations of God's message of salvation. (93)

To sum up, we see that the miracles in the Apostolic Age are a continuation of Jesus's miracles, thereby forming a unique sequence in Christ's ministry, as well as his apostles. (94) 'Apostles' are: Christ's representatives (Matthew 10:1-15), exercising unique authority in the early church (Acts 15:4, 6, 22, 23), performing signs, works and miracles (2 Corinthians 12:12), witnesses of the risen Christ (1 Corinthians 9:1-2; 15:5-8), *only a part* of the beginning church (Ephesians 2:20), recipients of the

Lord’s divine revelation (Galatians 1:12) and are not anticipated after the Apostle Paul (1 Corinthians 15:8). (95) As such, once the Christian church was founded, the office and gift of Apostles stopped, since nobody is able to meet the qualifications specified in Acts 1:21-22. (96)

With the arrival of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, we understand that all the miracles associated with the Apostles’ work are supports that are recorded for us in the Bible to point us directly to Christ. While the miracles are remarkable in an by themselves, they always reveal Jesus’ works, and are always *His* miracles. The authority Christ gives to His Apostles is thus, always linked to the reality of the Gospel, that is the proclamation of His vindication through the resurrection - evidenced expressly in the ministry of Peter and Paul - also seen in Peter’s preaching at Pentecost. (97)

What we can also learn from this is the stern and firm warning against grieving the Holy Spirit (seen in the fate of Ananias and Sapphira), as well as staying away from all forms of evil (such as divination, sorcery, fortune-telling and the like) - a warning to all people, particularly believers (Revelation 21:8; 22:15). So, even without ‘Apostles’ today, we have their apostolic authority revealed to us in the Bible, and the Person and power of the Holy Spirit to help us embrace the ‘miracle’ of God’s Work, giving us fresh insight and direction daily as we grow in our personal walk of faith with our Lord Jesus Christ. (98)

Are There Still Miracles Today?

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a ringing gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have absolute faith so as to move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and exult in the surrender of my body, but have not love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no account of wrongs. Love takes no pleasure in evil, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.

But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be restrained; where there is knowledge, it will be dismissed. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial passes away.

When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I set aside childish ways. Now we see but a dim reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

And now these three remain: faith, hope, and love; but the greatest of these is love.
(1 Corinthians 13 BSB)

Having considered the miracles in the Apostolic Age, as the Christian church begins, we are now thinking about a question, people often ask: “Are there miracles today?” As we had seen in the foregoing segments, there are many things the Bible tells us about miracles, and so we always have to make sure, we do not go above and beyond what God’s word says.

However, in short, if we understand who Jesus is - as our personal Lord and Savior - empowering us by the Holy Spirit and through His Word, the short answer to the above question is certainly “YES!”

So depending on who is asking this question and especially, *why*, a better question may be: “Does God answer prayers?” Even better yet: “Is God still sovereignly at work in the universe?” and *best* to ask: “Does Christ work in the hearts and lives of His children (believers) today?” The following is a response to these three questions, which will help us to formulate an answer to the above opening question about miracles today.

First, does God answer prayers? If we think about prayer and God answering our prayers as a kind of ‘miracle,’ the Bible does have something to say about this. For example, Jesus Himself teaches us how to pray, in the Lord’s Prayer:

“So then, this is how you should pray:
‘Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be Your name.
Your kingdom come,
Your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.’”
(Matthew 6:9-13 BSB)

Here we see that prayer is not just an option, but a God-given requirement for all of His own. If we did not expect God to answer prayers, why would we pray in the first place? The truth is, what we learn from Jesus here is that in our prayers, there is an element of surrender to God’s holiness and will (v. 9-10), God’s provision for us (v. 11), God’s call for us to

forgiveness (v. 12) and God's protection from our own broken sin nature and Satan with his lies and deception (v. 13).

Often God answers our prayer(s) (in *His* perfect plan, purpose and timing) and He also provides sufficient evidence of His divine care and love for us, so that we do not need a miraculous 'sign,' or to distort our Christian witness by embellishing what God has done on our behalf. In other words, we can 'see' our God's work and His hand in our lives, and know in our hearts God is with us. (99)

Therefore, not only is Jesus alive today in heaven, as sovereign Lord of Lords and King of Kings, but He is also actively interceding on our behalf, on the basis of His ultimate sacrifice on the cross (2 Timothy 1:9-10) through the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit amidst His children on earth. (100) Thus, as we understand who Jesus is, why He came and what He accomplished for us (on our behalf), on the cross, we know that God answers prayer, and so we do well to 'pray without ceasing' as the Apostle Paul instructs us:

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
(Philippians 4:6-7 BSB)

Next, we are addressing the question: "Is God still sovereignly at work in the universe?" The short answer is 'yes,' foremost, since He has given us His Word, the Bible, as demonstration of this sovereignty. Nevertheless, it is up to us to open the Bible daily and immerse ourselves in it:

This Book of the Law must not depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. For then you will prosper and succeed in all you do.
Have I not commanded you to be strong and courageous? Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."
(Joshua 1:8-9 BSB)

At times, some people maintain that there are records of miracles outside the Bible, from which the Bible 'borrowed' its own miracles. However, the evidence for this is questionable at best and does not compare to the internal evidence in the Bible. (101) Along with such false propositions, are assertions other people make against the Bible, such as an outright denial that miracles are real - based on an 'Enlightenment worldview' - thereby claiming the Bible as being untrue. (102) What eludes those who make such

assertions is that records of miracles in the Bible are never designed as a proof of God's existence. (103)

As such, faith in miracles as recorded in Scripture lines up with an appreciation of God's supernatural power, along with showing His sovereign plan of salvation for all mankind through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In other words, Christ has accomplished the ultimate reversal of Adam's sin, from which - apart from Jesus - nobody is able to save himself (Romans 3:23; 5:12-21; 8:1-8). Thus, as we acknowledge our need for our Lord's forgiveness, we realize that He is actively and sovereignly at work in the universe. (104) Therefore, as believers, we have the miracle of God's self-revelation to us through the Bible, actively and sovereignly guiding us into His truth, through His living Word, as Jesus says:

"My sheep listen to My voice; I know them, and they follow Me."
(John 10:27 BSB)

Lastly, in addressing the question: "Does Christ work in the hearts and lives of His children (Christians) today?" In short: Yes. How so? Answer: through the Person and power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit arrived at Pentecost (Acts 2) following our Lord's resurrection and ascension, remarkably, as Jesus had promised prior to His death and resurrection:

"However, when the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth. For He will not speak on His own, but He will speak what He hears, and He will declare to you what is to come. He will glorify Me by taking from what is Mine and disclosing it to you. Everything that belongs to the Father is Mine. That is why I said that the Spirit will take from what is Mine and disclose it to you."
(John 16:13-14 BSB)

The Holy Spirit is the third member of the 'Trinity,' distinct from God - the Father, and God - the Son (Jesus Christ) forming the so-called 'God-head.' God exists in three separate, yet simultaneously, co-equal persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. So although the word *Trinity* itself is not used in Scripture, the Bible reveals this teaching (Genesis 1:26; Matthew 28:19). (105) As the above verses show (John 16:13-14) the Holy Spirit does not speak on His own, but only what He receives from Christ. Thereby, among other things, He teaches (John 14:26), witnesses (John 15:26), searches (1 Corinthians 2:11), intercedes (prays for us, when we don't know what to pray for) (Romans 8:26-27) and can also be grieved (Ephesians 4:30). (106)

It is then the Holy Spirit who helps believers in their personal walk of faith. Thereby, He fulfills several functions (among others): First, He helps us avoid evil. This is crucial, since signs (or 'miracles') from God must be distinguished from works of so-called 'magic,' from works that are of satanic

origin (Matthew 24:24) designed to deceive people, including believers (2 Thessalonians 2:9; Revelation 13:14; 16:14; 19:20). (107)

This is particularly important, when it comes to the use of spiritual gifts - that is God-given ability to edify the church, which is, the body of Christ and to look after other believers (1 Corinthians 12-14). It is vital here to understand, that such gifts must *always* be used to build up (help, support and truly love) other Christians, since any other expression of 'gifts' does not point to the cross, that is to Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit ensures that spiritual gifts are used properly and no Christian is without such a gift, which is always part of God-given service and mission. (108) In short, a spiritual gift prepares a believer for personal spiritual service (1 Corinthians 12:11) and another spiritual gift enables a believer to edify the church (Ephesians 4:11-13). (109)

In sum, we have seen that miracles still happen today. These are manifested in and through God's response to us (as believers) in our prayers. Also, through the Bible, that is God's 'living eternal word' and promise to us, we can see and experience that He is still sovereignly at work in the universe. In addition, through the Person and power of the Holy Spirit, Christ is actively at work in the hearts and lives of His children - helping us to avoid evil, giving us guidance and direction to participate in building His kingdom, as we use our spiritual gifts to look after other Christians (the church).

Miracles do not have to follow a single, perceivable, predictable pattern, since if they did do so, they would stop to be perceived as miracles. (110) Also, miracles have not stopped being miracles, simply because some claim they are myths, while others claim they are impossible. 'Science' and 'Enlightenment' philosophy has in no way refuted even the possibility of miracles, and to deny divine miracles may simply reveal a lack of faith in God's power. (111) So, in response to the opening question in this segment, we positively affirm that there are miracles today. Among the most significant of them is to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, the sovereign Lord of the Universe, who loves us and cares for us in ways known (and often) unbeknownst to us.

Conclusion

…how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?
This salvation was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, and was affirmed by God through signs, wonders, various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to His will.
(Hebrews 2:3-4 BSB)

So, what can we learn from our foregoing exploration of miracles in the Bible, and especially, the miracles of Jesus Christ? For one, despite the challenges of defining what a miracle is, we have seen that it is possible to understand what a miracle points to, more precisely - as the Bible reveals - *to whom* miracles point to, namely Jesus Christ, as Messiah. As such, true miracles are signs God uses in the Bible to point back to Himself and reveal the truth about Him. (112) This is one of the main reasons Jesus performs such signs, thereby authenticating and substantiating His message, that is the gospel message, "the kingdom of heaven is near." (Matthew 10:7). (113)

Looking at the kinds of miracles Jesus did, we not only see that they are hard to classify (if even) and that each and every one is unique, not following a predictable method or pattern. While some miracles are similar to those observable in the OT, there are some that are exclusive to Jesus, such as giving sight to the blind. Alongside OT prophecy about the Messiah, as 'God in the Flesh' our Lord's miracles become recognizable as having been wrought in God, that is revealing God in Christ, which some in Jesus' time, such as Nicodemus (a Pharisee), recognized (John 3:1-2). (114)

What Christ's miracles teach us, is that there are only two possible responses to Him and His message of salvation. One response is to reject Him, and the other is to accept Him as personal Lord and Savior. This is the difference between spending eternity separated from God (in hell), or eternity with God - that is, with Jesus Christ in heaven (John 3:16-21). Not unlike many of the unbelieving Pharisees in Jesus' time, the attempt today (coming out of the so-called 'Enlightenment') to explain away Jesus' miracles as 'irrational' or label them 'myths,' pervades much of present-day thought. (115)

However, such 'rational' thinking, may not be rational at all, given evidence in favour of Jesus Christ and the Christian message of the gospel. Hence, along with (at the very least) learning about and reading about Christ in the Bible, a person has to consider God's existence and God's nature, the relationship of death to sin, Christ's sinlessness, OT prophecies centuries prior to the actual event, the attestation of multiple witnesses testimony as well as their credibility. (116)

So, in short, a possible approach other than a rationalist or mystical approach - is the supernatural approach to miracles in Scripture, including Jesus' miracles - affirming thereby: that the biblical events happened, that they took place as recorded, that Scripture proclaims a divine event, that it is irrelevant to look for a natural cause, since God is the One who performed the event, that the miracles in the Bible, and specifically the miracles Jesus did, as well as the fact of Christ's resurrection. (117)

The miracles Christ's disciples did, during His early ministry and after His death and resurrection (those miracles accomplished by a specific group of disciples, 'the Apostles') are similar to Christ's miracles, but never surpass His miracles. As such, the miracles (signs) Jesus does always point to a deeper reality that is perceivable through faith. (118) As the biblical canon

comes to a close, the purpose of Jesus' miracles done primarily through the Apostles, accomplish their goal, namely authenticating God's Word, that is the Bible. (119)

Lastly, in response to the question if miracles happen today, the answer is 'Yes!' Christ's divine immutability, foremost His resurrection, show that God can and does still operate sovereignly in the universe, i.e. nothing can stop God's plan and purpose. (120)

Jesus' answering our prayers, as believers, as well as Jesus' 'outpouring' of the Holy Spirit to empower believers for mission (Acts 2:1) shows God's ongoing work in the universe. (121) The Holy Spirit providing spiritual gifts (as 'signs') to help Christians grow in their personal walk of faith with Christ, and also gifts that (always) are given to edify and look after other believers (the church), are a foretaste of God's final victory over Satan and his evil works - to be consummated at Christ's Second Coming. (122)

God's greatest gift, though, giving us His Word (that is Jesus Christ as 'the Word') and coming to us as 'God in the Flesh,' and providing us with the written manifestation of His eternal promise of salvation (the Bible) is the greatest miracle of all!

The Bible tells us:

"Salvation exists in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."
(Acts 4:12 BSB)

Therefore, if we consider the 'miracles' Christ (and only He) offers, namely Jesus rescuing His people from sin, which is the main theme of the gospel - eternal salvation - we realize this is a call to humility and repentance. Christ died for us on the cross, lives in us (as believers) (John 15:4; 17:26; Colossians 1:27) and has invited us to embrace Him in His death and resurrection life (Romans 6:3-10; Colossians 2:12, 20; 3:1). (123) This should prompt all of us to heed our Lord's Words: "Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on earth?" (Luke 18:8) (BSB). Amen.

Notes

(1) Grudem, Wayne A. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand
Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000., p.355.
(2) Groothuis, Douglas R. *Christian Apologetics: A comprehensive Case for Biblical Faith*. [2nd ed.]. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2022., p.571.
(3) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011, p.1360.
(4) Enns, Paul P. *The Moody Handbook of Theology: Revised and Expanded*. Chicago, IL:
Moody Publishers, 2014., p.285.
(5) Grudem, Wayne, ed. *ESV Study Bible*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008., 2023.
(6) Harris, Murray J. *John*. Edited by Andreas J. Köstenberger, Robert W. Yarbrough. Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing, 2015., p.4.
(7) Enns, Paul P. *The Moody Handbook of Theology: Revised and Expanded*. Chicago, IL:
Moody Publishers, 2014., p.242.

(8) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011, p.957.
(9) Twelftree, *Graham H. Jesus the Miracle Worker: A Historical & Theological study*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999., p.145-146.
(10) Twelftree, *Graham H. Jesus the Miracle Worker: A Historical & Theological study*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999., p.208.
(11) Twelftree, *Graham H. Jesus the Miracle Worker: A Historical & Theological study*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999., p.127.
(12) Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007., 423-424.
(13) Enns, Paul P. *The Moody Handbook of Theology: Revised and Expanded*. Chicago, IL:
Moody Publishers, 2014., p.240.
(14) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., 332.
(15) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009., p.311.
(16) Enns, Paul P. *The Moody Handbook of Theology: Revised and Expanded*. Chicago, IL:
Moody Publishers, 2014., p.242.
(17) Bock, Darrell L. *A Theology of Luke and Acts: God's Promised Program, Realized for All*
Nations. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2012., p.250-253.
(18) Groothuis, Douglas R. *Christian Apologetics: A comprehensive Case for Biblical Faith*. [2nd ed.]. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2022., p.567.
(19) Bartholomew, Craig G., Daniel J. Treier, Kevin Jon Vanhoozer, and Nicholas Thomas Wright. *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005., p.516.
(20) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., 331.
(21) Hunter, Drew. *Matthew: A 12-Week Study*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2014., p.40.
(22) Alexander, T. Desmond and Brian S. Rosner, eds. *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. Leicester: IVP Academic, 2000., 776.
(23) Grudem, Wayne A. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand
Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000., p.359.
(24) Enns, Paul P. *The Moody Handbook of Theology: Revised and Expanded*. Chicago, IL:
Moody Publishers, 2014., p.243.
(25) Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008., p.64.
(26) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011, p.956.

(27) Brown, C. "Miracle." In vol. 3 of *International Bible Encyclopedia*, Fully Revised. Edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986., p.371.
(28) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011, p.957.
(29) Alexander, T. Desmond and Brian S. Rosner, eds. *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. Leicester: IVP Academic, 2000., 776.
(30) Groothuis, Douglas R. *Christian Apologetics: A comprehensive Case for Biblical Faith*. [2nd ed.]. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2022., p.573.
(31) Caneday, A. B. “Sign.” In Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible, edited by David Noel Freedman, Allen C. Myers, and Astrid B. Beck, 1219. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000.
(32) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009., p.317.
(33) Harvey, Bryon D. 2016. “Sign.” In *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, edited by John D. Barry, David Bomar, Derek R. Brown, Rachel Klippenstein, Douglas Mangum, Carrie Sinclair Wolcott, Lazarus Wentz, Elliot Ritzema, and Wendy Widder. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.
(34) Grudem, Wayne, ed. *ESV Study Bible*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008., 2023.
(35) Brown, C. "Miracle." In vol. 3 of *International Bible Encyclopedia*, Fully Revised. Edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986., p.373.
(36) Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008., p.180.
(37) Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007., 423-424.
(38) *Nelson's Complete Book Of Bible Maps And Charts*, 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010., p.343.
(39) Bock, Darrell L. *A Theology of Luke and Acts: God’s Promised Program, Realized for All*
Nations. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2012., p.250-253.
(40) Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008., p.250-253.
(41) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.162-169.
(42) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.61.
(43) Brown, C. "Miracle." In vol. 3 of *International Bible Encyclopedia*, Fully Revised. Edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986., p.376.
(44) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011, p.957.
(45) Twelftree, *Graham H. Jesus the Miracle Worker: A Historical & Theological study*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999., p.30.

(46) Twelftree, *Graham H. Jesus the Miracle Worker: A Historical & Theological study*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999., p.224.
(47) Kittel, Gerhard, Gerhard Friedrich, and Geoffrey William Bromiley. In *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Abridged in One Volume, 773-76. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1985.
(48) Buzzard, Justin. *John: A 12-Week Study*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2014., p.26.
(49) Enns, Paul P. *The Moody Handbook of Theology: Revised and Expanded*. Chicago, IL:
Moody Publishers, 2014., p.244.
(50) Alexander, T. Desmond and Brian S. Rosner, eds. *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. Leicester: IVP Academic, 2000., 777.
(51) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., 335-336.
(52) Grudem, Wayne A. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand
Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000., p.357.
(53) Twelftree, *Graham H. Jesus the Miracle Worker: A Historical & Theological study*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999., p.233.
(54) Brown, C. "Miracle." In vol. 3 of *International Bible Encyclopedia*, Fully Revised. Edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986., p.376.
(55) Brown, C. "Miracle." In vol. 3 of *International Bible Encyclopedia*, Fully Revised. Edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986., p.371.
(56) Brown, C. "Miracle." In vol. 3 of *International Bible Encyclopedia*, Fully Revised. Edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986., p.374.
(57) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., 331.
(58) Berkouwer, G. C. *The Providence of God*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1952., 247.
(59) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011, p.958.
(60) Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007., 423.
(61) Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007., 423.
(62) Alexander, T. Desmond and Brian S. Rosner, eds. *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. Leicester: IVP Academic, 2000., 777.
(63) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.61.

(64) Kittel, Gerhard, Gerhard Friedrich, and Geoffrey William Bromiley. In *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Abridged in One Volume, 773-76. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1985.
(65) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009., p.318.
(66) Brown, C. "Miracle." In vol. 3 of *International Bible Encyclopedia*, Fully Revised. Edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986., p.380.
(67) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011, p.955.
(68) Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008., p.548.
(69) Grudem, Wayne, ed. *ESV Study Bible*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008., 2023.
(70) Richards, Larry. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Words*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999., p.226-227.
(71) Richards, Larry. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Words*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999., p.226-227.
(72) Bock, Darrell L. *A Theology of Luke and Acts: God's Promised Program, Realized for All*
Nations. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2012., p.250-253.
(73) Carson, D. A. ed. *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015., 1949, 2021.
(74) Twelftree, *Graham H. Jesus the Miracle Worker: A Historical & Theological study*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999., p.67.
(75) Stein, Robert H. *Luke*. The New American Commentary: Volume 24. Nashville, TN: B&H, 1992., p.303-304.
(76) Carson, D. A. ed. *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015., 2096.
(77) Twelftree, *Graham H. Jesus the Miracle Worker: A Historical & Theological study*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999., p.116-117.
(78) Twelftree, *Graham H. Jesus the Miracle Worker: A Historical & Theological study*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999., p.86.
(79) Berkouwer, G. C. *The Providence of God*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1952., 227.
(80) Brown, C. "Miracle." In vol. 3 of *International Bible Encyclopedia*, Fully Revised. Edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986., p.376.
(81) Kittel, Gerhard, Gerhard Friedrich, and Geoffrey William Bromiley. In *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Abridged in One Volume, 773-76. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1985.
(82) Berkouwer, G. C. *The Providence of God*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1952., 242.
(83) Packer, J. I. *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1993. Logos Bible Software.

(84) Packer, J. I. *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1993. Logos Bible Software.
(85) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011, p.957.
(86) Polhill, John B. *Acts*. The New American Commentary: Volume 26. Nashville, TN: B&H, 1992., p.116.
(87) Twelftree, *Graham H. Jesus the Miracle Worker: A Historical & Theological study*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999., p.186-187.
(88) Blomberg, Craig L. *A Handbook of New Testament Exegesis*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010., p.233.
(89) Enns, Paul P. *The Moody Handbook of Theology: Revised and Expanded*. Chicago, IL:
Moody Publishers, 2014., p.285.
(90) Bock, Darrell L. *A Theology of Luke and Acts: God's Promised Program, Realized for All*
Nations. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2012., p.250-253.
(91) Carson, D. A. ed. *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015., 2260-2261.
(92) Bock, Darrell L. *A Theology of Luke and Acts: God's Promised Program, Realized for All*
Nations. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2012., p.250-253.
(93) Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008., p.67.
(94) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011, p.957.
(95) Enns, Paul P. *The Moody Handbook of Theology: Revised and Expanded*. Chicago, IL:
Moody Publishers, 2014., p.284.
(96) Enns, Paul P. *The Moody Handbook of Theology: Revised and Expanded*. Chicago, IL:
Moody Publishers, 2014., p.284.
(97) Brown, C. "Miracle." In vol. 3 of *International Bible Encyclopedia*, Fully Revised. Edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986., p.376.
(98) Packer, J. I. *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1993. Logos Bible Software.
(99) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011, p.956.
(100) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., 338.
(101) Brown, C. "Miracle." In vol. 3 of *International Bible Encyclopedia*, Fully Revised. Edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986., p.376.
(102) Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008., p.65.

(103) Brown, C. "Miracle." In vol. 3 of *International Bible Encyclopedia*, Fully Revised. Edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986., p.380.
(104) Agan, Jimmy. *Luke: A 12-Week Study*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2015., p.32-33.
(105) Stanley, Charles F. C*harles Stanley's Handbook for Christian living: Biblical Answers to Life's Tough Questions*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2008., p.181.
(106) Packer, J. I. *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1993. Logos Bible Software.
(107) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011, p.956.
(108) Packer, J. I. *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1993. Logos Bible Software.
(109) Enns, Paul P. *The Moody Handbook of Theology: Revised and Expanded*. Chicago, IL:
Moody Publishers, 2014., p.283.
(110) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011, p.957.
(111) Bartholomew, Craig G., Daniel J. Treier, Kevin Jon Vanhoozer, and Nicholas Thomas Wright. *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005., p.233.
(112) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011, p.956.
(113) Enns, Paul P. *The Moody Handbook of Theology: Revised and Expanded*. Chicago, IL:
Moody Publishers, 2014., p.285.
(114) Brown, C. "Miracle." In vol. 3 of *International Bible Encyclopedia*, Fully Revised. Edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986., p.380.
(115) Klein, William W., et al. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017., p.528.
(116) Sproul, R. C. The *Consequences of Ideas: Understanding the Concepts That Shaped our World*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2009., p.123.
(117) Stein, “The Miraculous in Scripture.” Accessed Dec. 9, 2024. https://www.biblicaltraining.org/learn/institute/nt510-biblical-hermeneutics/nt510-12-the-miraculous-in-scripture
(118) Carson, D.A. *The Gospel according to John*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991., p.175.
(119) Packer, J. I. *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1993. Logos Bible Software.
(120) Berkouwer, G. C. *The Providence of God*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1952., 231.

(121) Carson, D. A. ed. *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015., 2210.
(122) Kittel, Gerhard, Gerhard Friedrich, and Geoffrey William Bromiley. In *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Abridged in One Volume, 773-76. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1985.
(123) Packer, J. I. *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1993. Logos Bible Software.

Bibliography

Agan, Jimmy. *Luke: A 12-Week Study*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2015.

Alexander, T. Desmond and Brian S. Rosner, eds. *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. Leicester: IVP Academic, 2000.

Bartholomew, Craig G., Daniel J. Treier, Kevin Jon Vanhoozer, and Nicholas Thomas Wright. *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005.

Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007.

Berkouwer, G. C. *The Providence of God*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1952.

Blomberg, Craig L. *A Handbook of New Testament Exegesis*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010.

Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009.

Bock, Darrell L. *A Theology of Luke and Acts: God's Promised Program, Realized for All Nations*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2012.

Brown, C. "Miracle." In vol. 3 of *International Bible Encyclopedia*, Fully Revised. Edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986.

Buzzard, Justin. *John: A 12-Week Study*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2014.

Caneday, A. B. “Sign.” In Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible, edited by David Noel Freedman, Allen C. Myers, and Astrid B. Beck, 1219. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000.

Carson, D. A. ed. *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015.

Carson, D.A. *The Gospel according to John*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991.

Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011.

Enns, Paul P. *The Moody Handbook of Theology: Revised and Expanded*. Chicago, IL:
Moody Publishers, 2014.

Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995.

Groothuis, Douglas R. *Christian Apologetics: A comprehensive Case for Biblical Faith*. [2nd ed.]. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2022.

Grudem, Wayne, ed. *ESV Study Bible*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008., 2023.

Grudem, Wayne A. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand
Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000.

Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan,
2012.

Harris, Murray J. *John*. Edited by Andreas J. Köstenberger, Robert W. Yarbrough. Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing, 2015.

Harvey, Bryon D. 2016. “Sign.” In *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, edited by John D. Barry, David Bomar, Derek R. Brown, Rachel Klippenstein, Douglas Mangum, Carrie Sinclair Wolcott, Lazarus Wentz, Elliot Ritzema, and Wendy Widder. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

Hunter, Drew. *Matthew: A 12-Week Study*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2014.

Kittel, Gerhard, Gerhard Friedrich, and Geoffrey William Bromiley. In *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Abridged in One Volume, 773-76. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1985.

Klein, William W., et al. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017.

Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.

Nelson's Complete Book Of Bible Maps And Charts, 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010.

Packer, J. I. *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1993. Logos Bible Software.

Polhill, John B. *Acts*. The New American Commentary: Volume 26. Nashville, TN: B&H, 1992.

Richards, Larry. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Words*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999.

Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008.

Sproul, R. C. The *Consequences of Ideas: Understanding the Concepts That Shaped our World*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2009.

Stanley, Charles F. C*harles Stanley's Handbook for Christian living: Biblical Answers to Life's Tough Questions*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2008.

Stein, Robert H. *Luke*. The New American Commentary: Volume 24. Nashville, TN: B&H, 1992.

Stein, “The Miraculous in Scripture.” Accessed Dec. 9, 2024. https://www.biblicaltraining.org/learn/institute/nt510-biblical-hermeneutics/nt510-12-the-miraculous-in-scripture

Twelftree, *Graham H. Jesus the Miracle Worker: A Historical & Theological study*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999.

For further study

Keathley IV, Hampton. “The Miracles of Jesus.” Accessed Dec. 10, 2024. https://bible.org/series/miracles-jesus

Sproul, R. C. “Does R.C. Sproul Believe in Miracles?” Accessed Dec. 9, 2024. https://learn.ligonier.org/articles/does-rcsproul-believe-miracles

Stein, “The Miraculous in Scripture.” Accessed Dec. 9, 2024. https://www.biblicaltraining.org/learn/institute/nt510-biblical-hermeneutics/nt510-12-the-miraculous-in-scripture

Twelftree, *Graham H. Jesus the Miracle Worker: A Historical & Theological study*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999.

Additional resources

Agan, Jimmy. *Luke: A 12-Week Study*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2015.

Anderson, Neil T. *The Bondage Breaker*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2019.

Buzzard, Justin. *John: A 12-Week Study*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2014.

Cloud, Henry and John Sims Townsend. *Safe People: How to Find Relationships That Are Good for You and Avoid Those That Aren't*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016.

Enns, Paul P. *The Moody Handbook of Theology: Revised and Expanded*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014.

Hunter, Drew. *Matthew: A 12-Week Study*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2014.

Polhill, John B. *Acts*. The New American Commentary: Volume 26. Nashville, TN: B&H, 1992.

Stanley, Charles F. C*harles Stanley's Handbook for Christian living: Biblical Answers to Life's Tough Questions*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2008.

Stanley, Charles F. '*How to Listen to God*.' Nashville, TN: Oliver Nelson Books, 1985.

Stanley, Charles F. *Landmines in the Path of the Believer*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2007.

Stanley, Charles F. *Living in the power of the Holy Spirit*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2005.

Stanley, Charles F. *Prayer: The Ultimate Conversation*. New York, NY: Howard Books, New York, 2013.

Stanley, Charles F. *The Charles F. Stanley Life Principles Bible*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2017.

THE MIRACLES OF JESUS
CHART A

HEALING MIRACLES	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JOHN
The Leper's Prayer	8:2-4	**1:40-42**	5:12-13	
The Faith of the Centurion	**8:5-13**		7:1-10	
Jesus Heals at Peter's House	8:14-15	**1:30-31**	4:38-39	
The Demons and the Pigs	8:28-34	**5:1-15**	8:27-35	
Jesus Heals a Paralytic	9:2-7	**2:3-12**	5:18-25	
The Woman with bleeding	9:20-22	**5:25-29**	8:43-48	
Jesus Heals Two Blind Men	**9:27-31**			
The Mute, Demon-possessed Man	**9:32-33**			
The Man with a Shriveled hand	12:10-13	**3:1-5**	6:6-10	
The Blind, Mute, Demon-possessed Man	**12:22**		11:14	
The Faith of the Canaanite Woman	**15:21-28**	7:24-30		
The Boy With an Evil Spirit	17:14-18	**9:17-29**	9:38-43	
Jesus Heals Two Blind men (also Bartimaeus)	20:29-34	**10:46-52**	18:35-43	
The Deaf and Mute Man		**7:31-37**		
Jesus Expels and Unclean Spirit		**1:23-26**	4:33-35	
The Blind Man at Bethsaida		**8:22-26**		
Jesus Heals a Disabled Woman			**13:11-13**	
Jesus Heals a Man with Dropsy			**14:1-4**	
The Ten Lepers			**17:11-19**	
Jesus Heals the High Priest's Servant			**22:50-51**	
Jesus Heals the Official's Son				**4:46-54**
The Sick Man at the Pool of Bethesda				**5:1-9**
Jesus Heals the Man				**9:1-7**

Born Blind				
CHART A (Continued)				
MIRACLES OF RAISING THE DEAD	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JOHN
The Raising of Jairus's Daughter	9:18-19, 23-25	**5:22-24, 38-42**	8:41-42, 49-56	
Jesus Raises a Widow's Son			**7:11-15**	
The Death of Lazarus				**11:1-44**
MIRACLES SHOWING POWER OVER NATURE				
Jesus Calms the Storm	8:23-27	**4:37-41**	8:22-25	
Jesus Walks on Water	14:25	**6:48-51**		6:19-21
The Feeding of the Five Thousand	14:15-21	**6:35-44**	9:12-17	6:6-13
The Feeding of the Four Thousand	**15:32-38**	8:1-9		
The Temple Tax - Coin in Fish	**17:24-27**			
Jesus Curses the Fig Tree	21:18-22	**11:12-14, 20-25**		
The Large Catch of Fish			**5:4-11**	
Turning Water Into Wine				**2:1-11**
The Other Large Catch of Fish				**21:1-11**

Miraculous Events Surrounding Jesus Christ (Selection)

CHART B

Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
The Virgin Conception and Birth	1:18-25		1:26-2:20	
Holy Spirit Descends and Voice Speaking from Heaven	3:16-17	1:9-11	3:21-22	1:29-34
The Transfiguration of Jesus	17:1-8	9:2-8	9:28-36	
Voice Speaking from Heaven				12:27-33
Jesus Says “I am He” and Soldiers and Officials Fall to Ground				18:4-6
Heals Ear of High Priest’s Servant			22:50-51	
Darkness Falls and Temple Curtain is Torn from Top to Bottom	27:45, 51	15:33, 38	23:44-45	
Earthquake and Dead Bodies of Saints Raised	27:52-56			
Earthquake (Matthew) and Angels Appear	28:1-7	16:5-7	24:4-7	20:11-13
Jesus’ Resurrection Appearances and His Ascension (Luke)	28:9-20		24:13-53	20:14-29; 21:4-23

Adapted from Brown, C. "Miracle." In vol. 3 of *International Bible Encyclopedia*, Fully Revised. Edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986., p.374.

Jesus’ Seven Signs and What They Reveal About Jesus in the Gospel of John

CHART C

Sign	Meaning	Bible Verse
Changing Water Into Wine	Jesus as source of life.	John 2:1-12
Healing the Son of a Nobleman	Jesus is supreme over space.	John 4:46-54
Healing Lame Man at Bethesda Pool	Jesus is superior over time.	John 5:1-17
Feeding the Five Thousand	Jesus as the bread of life.	John 6:1-14
Walking on Water and	Jesus is superior over	John 6:15-21

Calming a Storm	nature.	
Healing Man Born Blind	Jesus as light of the world.	John 9:1-41
Bringing Lazarus Back to Life from the Dead	Jesus is superior over life and death.	John 11:17-45

Adapted from *Nelson's Complete Book Of Bible Maps And Charts*, 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010., p.343.

God's Ten Plagues Inflicted on Egypt Through the Prophet Moses From the Book of Exodus

CHART D

The Plagues	The Outcome
1. Blood (7:20)	Pharaoh's heart hardened (7:22)
2. Frogs (8:6)	Pharaoh pleads for relief, promises freedom (8:8), heart hardened (8:15)
3. Lice (8:17)	Pharaoh's heart hardened (8:19)
4. Flies (8:24)	Pharaoh bargains (8:28), but heart is hardened (8:32)
5. Livestock diseased (9:6)	Pharaoh's heart hardened (9:7)
6. Boils (9:10	Pharaoh's heart hardened (9:21)
7. Hail (9:23)	Pharaoh pleads relief (9:27), promises freedom (9:28), but heart is hardened (9:25)
8. Locusts (10:13)	Pharaoh bargains (10:11), begs relief (10:17), but heart is hardened (10:20)
9. Darkness (10:13)	Pharaoh bargains (10:24), but heart is hardened (10:27)
10. Death of firstborn (12:29)	Pharaoh and the Egyptians plead Israel to leave Egypt (12:31-33)
God increased His signs and wonders in the land of Egypt so that the Egyptians might recognize that *He* is the Lord.	

Adapted from *Nelson's Complete Book Of Bible Maps And Charts*, 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010., p.28.

CHART E	
Elijah's Miracles From the Books of 1 & 2 Kings	Elisha's Miracles From the Book of 2 Kings
Shut up the heavens causing a drought for three years. (1 Kings 17:1)	Transforms water from bad to good. (2 Kings 2:19-22)
Multiplied flour and oil for a widow (1 Kings 17:14-16)	Raises the dead (2 Kings 4:18-37)
Raised a widow's son from the dead (1 Kings 17:17, 22-23)	Multiplies food (2 Kings 4:1-7, 42-44)
Defeated the prophets of Baal with fire from heaven (1 Kings 18:25-38)	Heals a man with leprosy (2 Kings 5)
Brought rain to end drought (1 Kings 18:41-45)	Suspends laws of gravity in relation to water (causes axe head to float) (2 Kings 6:1-7)
Destroyed 51 soldiers with fire and lightening (2 Kings 1:9-12)	Brings blindness upon a Syrian army (2 Kings 6:13-23)
Parted the waters of the Jordan River (2 Kings 2:8)	

Adapted from *Nelson's Complete Book Of Bible Maps And Charts*, 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010., p.116-118.

Comparison of the Apostles - Peter and Paul In Book of Acts CHART F	
Peter	Paul
Heals man born lame. (3:1-11)	Heals man born lame. (14:8-18)
By his shadow people are healed. (3:15, 16)	People touched by aprons or handkerchiefs are healed. (19:11, 12)
Jews become jealous because of his success. (5:17)	Jews become jealous because of his success. (13:45)
Confronting a sorcerer, named Simon. (8:9-24)	Confronts a sorcerer, named Bar-Jesus. (13:6-11)
Brings back Tabitha (Dorcas) to life. (9:36-41)	Brings back Eutychus to life. (20:9-12)
Imprisoned and miraculously released by God. (12:3-19)	Imprisoned and miraculously released by God. (16:25-34)

Adapted from *Nelson's Complete Book Of Bible Maps And Charts*, 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas
Nelson, 2010., p.351.

The Sermon on the Mount of Jesus Christ

"Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them is like a wise man who built his house on the rock."
Matthew 7:24 (BSB)

Introduction:

The above verse helps us understand Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, since it is at the heart of His teachings and ministry. Jesus points here directly to Himself as 'God in the Flesh' and sets the stage for us and everyone who will ever follow Him, to listen to His voice, put into practice His teachings and build His Kingdom, as the Holy Spirit transforms us and guides us. (1) While there are both similarities and differences to the so-called 'Sermon on the Plain' (Luke 6:20-49), this does in no way make the Sermon on the Mount inauthentic, since Jesus may have well repeated His message and teachings on different occasions. It is cohesive, well-structured and unified. (2) (3) With every word of Jesus here being authentic, we are called to read, listen to and heed what He is saying carefully, since as the sermon concludes, there are only two possible options of response - to accept, or reject Christ's message. (4) Keeping this in mind, the following is a 'walk-through' with Jesus through His Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), and provides both interpretation and application for every segment of His teaching.

When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain and sat down. His disciples came to Him, and He began to teach them, saying:
Matthew 5:1–2 (BSB)

Interpretation:

This is the beginning of Jesus' well-known 'Sermon on the Mount,' so-called, because He is teaching here on a "mountain," (v.1) (i.e. a mountainside). The exact location of our Lord's teaching is unknown, and it is not helpful to try to attach any further symbolic significance here. (5) Similarly, there is no need to see this 'sermon' in any way as a contradiction to the so-called 'Sermon on the Plain' (Luke 6:20-49), since these may be separate sermons. (6) Christ's sitting down is a common way of Judaic teachers instructing others, and is a familiar position Jesus takes (see Matthew 13:1-2; 15:39; 26:55). (7) The "crowds" (v.1) are people who listen and watch Jesus out of curiosity, and the "disciples" (Greek: 'learners') are

people committed to Him, while later on, even many disciples leave Him (John 6:66). (8) What matters most is that all of Jesus' words are authentic , and therefore, what He teaches is unique, based on His divine authority as 'God in the Flesh,' our Messiah.

Application:

We see here, even before Jesus speaks, a distinction between people. There are crowds of people surrounding Jesus at this event, and yet it is our Lord's disciples who come to Him to hear Him teach. And as we know, later many 'disciples' turn away from Him, and only some remain committed to Jesus until the end, as witnesses to His crucifixion, death and resurrection. This is a harsh truth for all of us believers, that as Jesus' followers, we are called to persevere in our walk of faith until the end. However, that is the whole point of our Lord's sermon in which He encourages us and admonishes us to stand firm with Him, as He tells us about both blessings and persecutions for believers (Matthew 5:10-12) - an inevitable reality for us as Christians. (9) Yet, in the end, on Judgment Day, Jesus will set the record straight for all eternity.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets before you."
Matthew 5:3–12 (BSB)

Interpretation:

This sequence of Jesus' statements is called the Beatitudes. The name "beatitudes" is derived from Latin "blessed, happy," and summarizes the core teaching of the Sermon on the Mount. (10) The word for beatitudes as used here does not mean "happy," but rather refers to God's compensation for those who follow Jesus to the end - amidst hardship, suffering and persecution, those who God will honor at the Last Judgment. (11) In these

verses Jesus alludes to the Old Testament, and brings to mind both earthly and spiritual realities, culminating in v.12 where Jesus refers to the persecution of the prophets (especially Jeremiah). (12)

The “poor in spirit” (v.3) refers to all people who realize their complete helplessness of doing things solely in their own strength and trust in God as their one and only hope. “Those who mourn,” (v.4) are those who grieve over their own sins and those of others. In v.5 “the meek” who “will inherit the earth,” refers to all people who will ever come to Jesus and follow Him in dependence and humility. “Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness” (v.6) are those who long for God’s holiness in their own lives. Those who are merciful will receive God’s mercy (v.7), if not in this life, then certainly on Judgment Day. “The pure in heart” refers to those who have a personal and growing relationship with Christ, to be consummated in the life to come. The “peacemakers” (v.9) are people who strive after peace, as far as possible, that way manifesting the character of God. “Those who are persecuted because of righteousness,” (v.10) are those who by their righteous living may offend others - an important aspect of the Christian life, Jesus expands upon in v.11 - since being persecuted is not only part of following Jesus, but can be found throughout the Bible (i.e. persecution of the prophets in v.12). (13)

Application:

The beatitudes are at the very heart of Jesus’ teaching. As believers, we have to remind ourselves that while we can already experience these blessings in the here and now, through the person and power of the Holy Spirit, it is crucial to be aware that the complete manifestation of these blessings is in the age to come. (14) This holds true for the first beatitude (“poor in spirit” in v.3), since we realize our inadequacy before a holy God, and yet through Jesus Christ, we have our satisfaction and sufficiency in God. (15) Just as Jesus is humble and lowly, so are we as Christians.

The second beatitude continues along the lines of imitating Christ (“those who mourn” in v.4), as Jesus demonstrates what it is like to grieve and mourn (John 11:35). Our God also understands that since we are His followers we also mourn, as a result of persecution, due to the temporal prominence of wickedness in this world. (16)

In the third beatitude (“blessed are the meek,” v.5) we see another of Jesus’ personality traits expressed. We are to have the desire to put other people first before our own interests. (17)

The fourth beatitude (“hunger and thirst for righteousness,” v.6) is a call for all believers to have a passion to do what is right in God’s sight. This

is truly not always easy, and yet we are to seek first God's kingdom and His righteousness. Anything interfering or standing in the way of this *must* be set aside. (18)

In the fifth beatitude ("blessed are the merciful," v.7), we understand that being merciful is not optional, but a must. Without Christ's atoning sacrifice on the cross, due to God's mercy, we have new life through Jesus, which is our rebirth (having crucified our old sin-self with our Lord, and being raised up to 'new life' by His resurrection). It is only because of Christ's mercy and grace towards us, that we can live at all. (19)

The sixth beatitude ("the pure in heart" in v.8) is a call for us as Christians to humble ourselves in repentance and obedience to Christ, that is to have a "pure heart." A sincere devotion to Christ will always express itself in letting go of evil, deceit and malice, and thereby 'seeing God' with eyes of faith. (20)

In the seventh beatitude ("blessed are the peacemakers," in v.9) we are reminded of the greatest peacemaker ever, namely our Lord Jesus Christ, the 'Prince of Peace.' Thereby "sons of God," refers to our character, rather than to a position of prominence. (21) There is virtually no limit, as to how this can be practically expressed in our lives (Notice our Lord's first words to His disciples after His resurrection in John 20:19 - "Peace be with you…").

The sober reality we have to deal with as believers is exposed in the eighth beatitude ("blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness," in v.10), since we realize that persecution as believers is part of our walk of faith with Christ (see Romans 8:35-37; Hebrews 11:35-40). Persecution can come from people outside of believing communities, and from within believing communities, i.e. the church (see Matthew 7:15-23).

The call to persevere, for all of us as believers is in view here, as we live in this fallen evil world, and yet Jesus promises that our reward for our righteousness is the kingdom of heaven (living with Jesus in all eternity). (22) This is so important, that Jesus expands upon persecution in v.11-12, providing more details for us, so that we are better prepared.

To sum it up, the Christian life is not by default one of health and wealth, but rather a thorny, hard-edged walk, that calls us to stay close to our God as best as we can. Yet even though we face persecution - in the end - we are and will be truly blessed, since ours is the kingdom of heaven. (23)

"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its savor, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. You are the light of the world.

A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a basket. Instead, they set it on a stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."
Matthew 5:13–16 (BSB)

Interpretation:

Here, Jesus teaches about the witness of believers. He uses two illustrations ("salt of the earth," in v.13 and "light of the world," in v.14) to make this point. The first illustration is taken from the ancient world, with salt being used as a preservative for food. Jesus indirectly links His followers to salt, which purpose is to prevent deterioration, and so both the salt and Jesus' followers are not to deteriorate. (24) The second illustration Jesus uses ("light"), is a way of revealing the way to go by means of illumination. The point is that Jesus' followers are to be models of discipleship within a fallen world, which is specifically the result of a person's behaviour (which is not a contradiction to Matthew 6:1-4, where Jesus is talking about a person's purpose, that is, what motivates a person's heart to do something). (25) As such, being "salt" and "light" is not what people are to become, but actually - as Christ's witnesses - who believers are. (26)

Application:

The application for Christians in this passage is that we learn about the Christ-like character and actions we are to display in a fallen world. This is our vocation, our calling as believers, and as we build God's kingdom, we can expect opposition and even persecution. (27) In our witness as Christians led by the Holy Spirit, we are to have a positive influence on others, which can apply to many different situations, such as where we live and where we work, for example. (28)

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have not come to abolish them, but to fulfill them. For I tell you truly, until heaven and earth pass away, not a single jot, not a stroke of a pen, will disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. So then, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do likewise will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever practices and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you

that unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."
Matthew 5:17–20 (BSB)

Interpretation:

These verses are among the most challenging in the Bible. (29) The reason for this is the complexity and debate surrounding the interpretive traditions here. (30) Thus, we need to find out more about the context Jesus is talking about here. As such, when Jesus talks about not abolishing the law, but fulfilling it, we have to understand that He is bringing about the age of salvation, along with completing what is prophesied in the law and the Old Testament in and through Himself. (31) The two things we are considering here are interpreting these verses (What do they mean?) and how to apply them (What do they mean for me as a Christian?).

So, let us investigate this text and its meaning verse-by-verse. In verse 17, we are looking at what Jesus means by "the law or the prophets," and "to fulfill them." When our Lord refers to 'the law or the Prophets,' He is referring to the entire Old Testament. (32) Also, in reference to 'fulfillment' Jesus is talking about bringing to fruition the law and the Prophets in and through Himself. As such, we see this after His resurrection, appearing to two disciples on the road to Emmaus, conducting the first 'Bible Study' in the New Testament, discussing how the law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms point to Himself. (33)

In verse 18, "until heaven and earth pass away," refers to the 'end of the age,' that is Christ's Second Coming. (39) In the same verse, Jesus' words "…not a single jot, not a stroke of a pen, will disappear from the law until everything is accomplished," deals with all predicted events about Himself coming to pass, which is emphasized by the word "everything," indicating God's fully divine purpose. (35)

In verse 19 then, Jesus admonishes us not to tamper with God's Word, but to protect ourselves from such 'tampering' by not nullifying 'these commandments' (which means those commandments fulfilled and even re-interpreted by Jesus). (36) The reference to "least" and "great" in the kingdom of heaven reveals apparent different gradations of eternal reward, of which the Bible does not tell us anything more than this (other than 1 Corinthians 3:10-15).

In verse 20 Jesus exposes the 'righteousness' of the "scribes and Pharisees," as self-righteousness, and therefore not being righteous at all, since they were not in it for God, but only for themselves, as 'people-pleasers.'

Application:

What stands out here is that Christ not only ‘fulfills’ the law, but demonstrates His ultimate authority over it, having a unique divine knowledge of God’s will, which is expressed in how Jesus interprets and applies the law. (37) Following Jesus’ lead, and His absolute authority over everything, we do well to take Him at His Word here - that means, we are to obey His commandments. For example, the Ten Commandments in the Old Testament (Exodus 20:1-17); Deuteronomy 20:1-17) of which the first four deal with having a right relationship with God, and of which the last six deal with having a right relationship with other people, are just as valid today, as they were then. (38)

In the subsequent parts we learn more about Jesus ‘fine-tuning’ some of the Laws that the religious leaders at the time had distorted. He also ‘narrows’ and ‘broadens’ some parts of the law, putting it into proper perspective.

“You have heard that it was said to the ancients, ‘Do not murder’ and ‘Anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, ‘Raca,’ will be subject to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be subject to the fire of hell. So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift. Reconcile quickly with

your adversary, while you are still on the way to court. Otherwise, he may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison. Truly I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny."
Matthew 5:21–26 (BSB)

Interpretation:

This passage is part of the so-called 'antithesis' segment that constitute the remainder of Matthew 5. Here we find six antithesis that all start with some kind or other form of "You have heard that is was said…but I tell you." (39) In verses 21 and 22 we see Jesus expanding (escalating)) the sixth commandment (Exodus 20:13) to a prohibition of anger. The term 'Raca' is an abusive Aramaic word, subjecting a person to liability before the highest Jewish court, the Sanhedrin. Even worse is calling a person a 'fool,' subjecting a person to "the fire of hell" (Greek translation of 'Gehenna' - referring to a Jerusalem garbage dump where trash was burned - this is another way of referring to "the fire of hell"). (40)

In verse 23-26 we encounter a command to reconciliation, which Jesus illustrates in two examples: One, the command to be reconciled before engaging in worship service ('leaving your gift before the altar'). Two, the command to settle swiftly with an adversary before going to court, since a person may end up in debtor's prison, with no opportunity to earn money, in order to get out. (41) Jesus is intensifying the original Old Testament command here, so that the original divine intention is revealed. (42)

Application:

What Jesus shows here is that human anger can easily escalate into something more severe, turning into violence, even murder. By expanding the Old Testament commandment, Jesus forbids anger. (43) Thus, we as believers today are also called to avoid being hateful and using abusive language. Similarly, as far as it is in our ability, we are to proactively reconcile with adversaries, even before going to court. (44)

"You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose

one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to depart into hell."
Matthew 5:27–30 (BSB)

Interpretation:

In this passage Jesus clarifies the seventh of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:14) and teaches about inner purity in verses 29 to 30. He reveals that the Old Testament command not to commit adultery originates in the lust of the heart and that way already constitutes a violation of the Old Testament command. (45)

Our Lord drives home the point how the law is linked to the impulse and willingness to sin, by using a form of exaggeration ('hyperbole') relating to the 'right eye' and the 'right hand.' (46) While in no way diminishing the seriousness of sin, Christ warns of the consequences of sin, that is to end in eternal hell.

Application:

How does this apply to Christians? Jesus shows us how lust begins in the heart and thereby already is a form of adultery. In His teaching, avoiding adultery is insufficient. (47) As believers, we are to deal with sin in a radical way, that is not to feed our imagination with sinful thoughts, but to take our thoughts captive (2 Corinthians 10:5). Jesus helps us understand the deeper spiritual reality behind lust, adultery and how they relate to sin. (48)

"It has also been said, 'Whoever divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.' But I tell you that anyone who divorces his

wife, except for sexual immorality, brings adultery upon her. And he who marries a divorced woman commits adultery."
Matthew 5:31–32 (BSB)

Interpretation:

In this passage Jesus is finetuning the proper application of the Old Testament Mosaic Law concerning divorce and remarriage (Deuteronomy 24:1-4). What people were taught in Jesus' day is that a husband could divorce his wife, even for such trivial matters as accidently serving him burned food. However, the original application and reason as grounds for divorce, was and is adultery. (49) Christ clarifies that divorce due to adultery is permitted, yet *not* mandatory, since God detests divorce (Malachi 2:16) and never intended it to be so in the first place (Matthew 19:5-6). (50) Thus, Jesus is 'tightening' the Old Testament law, since he includes unlawful remarriage in his teaching, thereby establishing a double restriction. (51)

Application:

Following Jesus here, we learn that marriage is holy to God, who intends it to be between one man married to one woman (Matthew 19:3-12). Divorce is less than ideal, and should not be taken lightly. Other than for sexual infidelity divorce is not permissible for Jesus, and this should encourage us as believers to reconcile as top priority instead of seeking divorce. (52) Note, that what Jesus is relating to us here refers, primarily, to marriage between two believers, which is affirmed in another part of the Bible, by the Apostle Paul:

To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): A wife must not
separate from her husband. But if she does, she must remain unmarried or
else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife.
1 Corinthians 7:10–11 (BSB)

“Again, you have heard that it was said to the ancients, ‘Do not break your oath, but fulfill your vows to the Lord.’ But I tell you not to swear at all: either by heaven, for it is God’s throne; or by the earth, for it is His footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Nor should you swear by your head, for you cannot make a single hair white or black. Simply let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No.’ Anything more comes from the evil one.”
Matthew 5:33–37 (BSB)

Interpretation:

In this passage we see a clarification of the Old Testament (Leviticus 19:12) in the sense that Jesus is calling out the Pharisees avoiding accountability by swearing by something other than God Himself. The examples in verses 34-35, expose the faulty practice of the religious leaders of the time, since Jesus insists that even lesser things always relate to God. When Jesus says “not to swear at all,” this prohibition does not overturn the Old Testament command, but is a way of pointing to the requirement of truthfulness before God, hence Christ’s admonishment to let a person’s ‘yes’ be ‘yes,’ and your ‘no’, ‘no.’ (53) Thus, in using exaggerated language (‘hyperbole’) Christ does not prohibit all oath-taking, but is correcting a misconception of the Old Testament - pointing to the importance of being trustful in speech, instead of inventing schemes designed to circumvent a promise made. (54)

Application:

For us as Christians this means to be truthful at all times. While Jesus condemns false oath-taking, we realize the need for us as believers to be people of integrity. (55) Taking these verses absolutely literally is going beyond the responsible interpretation of this passage. As such, believers in the early church still took oaths, as the Bible reveals to us (Romans 11:9; 2 Corinthians 1:23; 1 Thessalonians 2:5, 10). (56)

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye and tooth for tooth.’ But I tell you not to resist an evil person. If someone slaps you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also; if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well; and if someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.”
Matthew 5:38–42 (BSB)

Interpretation:

Here, we find Jesus clarifying the meaning of Old Testament law in the context of His contemporaries (The whole passage in view here is v.38-48). The first part (v.38-42) helps us understand the meaning of personal abuse and personal self-sacrifice. (57) When Jesus says “not to resist an evil person,” he *does not mean* that we tolerate evil without using common sense and seeking God’s guidance in prayer and the Holy Spirit prompting us. Christ means here that there may be instances where we find ourselves in uncalled for situations, in which we are confronted with evil. Using the slap on the cheek example (a form of insult in Jesus’ time) believers are called not to retaliate in this specific situation.

This non-retaliating disposition of heart is then again applied to the abandonment of ‘rights’ in order to achieve a higher purpose, in this case, to avoid a lawsuit. Going two miles instead of one is another form of witnessing for Christ, illustrated here by Roman soldiers in Jesus’ time legally enlisting a civilian to carry their luggage for a given distance. The last part of this passage is an example of joyful giving to others in need. (58)

Application:

The practical application of Jesus’ words here, requires us to understand that these are not absolutes to be separated from their historical context. So, “turning the other cheek” does not mean we are ‘doormats’ to be abused at all times, but a warning that we may sometimes face unforeseen evil at times, especially as Christians. The other examples primarily reveal a non-retaliatory heart (avoiding insults, attempting to settle outside of courts) and a generous heart (giving freely to those in need).

However, these are not ‘one-size-fits-all’ commands, but require believers to apply them ethically according to circumstances as they change. (59)

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor’ and ‘Hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Do not even tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even Gentiles do the same? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”
Matthew 5:43–48 (BSB)

Interpretation:

In this second part of the passage, Jesus is correcting false teaching, since in v.43 “Hate your enemy” is not found in Old Testament Scripture, but only the first part “Love your neighbor” in Leviticus 19:18. (60) Jesus’ command here reveals not only the reality of persecution for His followers, but also shows Christ’s love expressed in believer’s hearts, as we are called to love our enemies and pray for our persecutors (v.44). Heeding this command of our God is imperative, since that way we are sons of our Father in heaven. We thereby reflect the character of God, that is Jesus Christ. (61) The command to be perfect (v.48) closes this section, and points back to Christ Himself as fulfillment of the law.

Application:

As we apply these commands of Jesus to our lives, we realize, especially in light of the last verse (v.48), that we are unable to do so, in our own strength, apart from Jesus. Even if people hate us (as believers) this does not mean we have to hate them, but are to manifest love and kindness toward them. (62) Our Lord teaches us that loving God and loving our

neighbor cannot be separated (Mark 12:29-31). *How* this is done specifically, may manifest itself differently, depending on the circumstances, yet that it *must* be done is not optional. Thus, as Jesus proclaims the demands of the kingdom of God, we as Christians are called to an unconditional commitment (63) - to say it in Jesus's Words:

> *"Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."*
> Matthew 5:48 (BSB)

"Be careful not to perform your righteous acts before men to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. So when you give to the needy, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men. Truly I tell you, they already have their full reward. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."
Matthew 6:1–4 (BSB)

Interpretation:

In these verses, Christ explains what genuine religious practices are, in God's sight. Along with keeping the law the religious leaders in Jesus' time, considered giving (Matthew 6:2-4), to pray (6:5-15) and to fast (6:16-18) as most important evidence of piety. However, as seen here, in giving to the needy, and the other passages about praying and fasting, Jesus warns about people doing these practices for the wrong reason, that is to gain human recognition. (64) In verse 2 Jesus illustrates such wrong motives, such as "sounding a trumpet," that is to draw attention to themselves. In verse 3 he continues His warning by commanding "do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing," in other words, not to give in order to receive human recognition, but to give in secret, and in that way doing what is acceptable in God's sight (v.4). (65)

Application:

From God's perspective, *that* we give is not as important as to *why* we give. Jesus makes it clear here, that giving for the sake of giving does not earn us any merit before God. Such motivation is a form of idolatry, and detestable to God. Rather, God who sees every person's heart, rewards those who are truly in it for Him and Him only:

> But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or height, for I have rejected him; the LORD does not see as man does. For man sees the outward appearance, but the LORD sees the heart."
> 1 Samuel 16:7 (BSB)

Jesus warns us and encourages us about what truly motivates the human heart. (66)

"And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. Truly I tell you, they already have their full reward. But when you pray, go into your inner room, shut your door, and pray to your Father, who is unseen. And your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not babble on like pagans, for they think that by their many words they will be heard. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him."
Matthew 6:5–8 (BSB)

Interpretation:

Here Jesus continues to warn about religious hypocrisy, in this case as it relates to false motives when it comes to prayer. Public prayer in Jesus' time was not uncommon be it in a synagogue or outside. (67) The point is not that Jesus prohibits all prayer (v.5), but reveals that a person's heart should be bent toward God only. That is why Jesus uses the example of private prayer (v.6) to illustrate that a person should be more inclined to pray alone before God, instead of seeking public acclaim, thereby displaying a false piety. (68)

In verse 7 Jesus further clarifies the way people should pray, using pagan rituals as an example of *how not* to pray (falsely assuming that repeating many words accomplishes something). In verse 8 He shows us why we are not to follow the pagan example, since God already "knows what you need before you ask Him."

Application:

Jesus makes it clear that prayer is not to be part of pretentious piety, but rather is part of a genuine relationship with God. Since God already knows what we need before we even ask Him, we are to come to Him with a humble, repentant heart, full of gratitude. This disposition of heart is the only acceptable way to God, and Jesus helps us with this further in revealing how to pray in the 'Lord's prayer' (Matthew 6:9-13)

"So then, this is how you should pray: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.'"
Matthew 6:9–13 (BSB)

Interpretation:

This prayer is usually known as "the Lord's Prayer," and in it Jesus tells us what our priorities should be in prayer. As such, verse 9-10 deals with God and His sovereignty, verse 11-13 deals with people (our physical needs, the need for forgiveness, and protection from Satan and all evil). (69)

The first petition in v.9 is a call for reverence before God, considering His holiness, and thereby acknowledging Jesus (God the Son) as our Lord and Savior, as well as God (God, the Father). The second and third petition in v.10

refer to God’s sovereign reign, which is already in place, but is still awaiting its future consummation in all its followers.

The fourth petition in v.11 relates to a common day labourer in Jesus’ time who reserved his wages at the end of the day to buy food. Similarly, we are called to trust Jesus to provide for our daily needs. The fifth petition in v.12, the need to be forgiven (as believers) and the need to forgive others is so important that Jesus picks up on this again in v.14-15:

> ***“For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive yours.”***
> Matthew 6:14–15 (BSB)

The last petition in v.13 does not mean that God is tempting us, but that we call upon Him to help us avoid temptations (see 1 Corinthians 10:13). Also, the call for delivering from “the evil one” (Satan) and all evil, in an acknowledgement of God’s power and calling out to our Lord Jesus Christ to protect us, since He is the only one who can do so, and did (see Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13). (70)

Application:

In this prayer, we learn that honoring God’s name and keeping it hallowed is the most important thing in the life of a believer. (71) Relying and trusting Him to provide for our daily needs is just as important for us, as is forgiving others, which is not optional, but a must.

The prayer is a model for us to follow as Christians, but not to be used in a repetitive, mechanical way, since it then becomes meaningless. (72) Rather, it should be part of the prayer life of believers, whose hear is truly bent towards our Lord Jesus Christ.

Note: The name for the Lord’s Prayer is derived from the Latin ‘Pater Noster’ for the initial words of the prayer “Our Father.” The ancient manuscripts of the Bible do not contain the popular doxology at the end of v.13 “For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.” (73)

“When you fast, do not be somber like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they already have their full reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that your fasting will not be obvious to

men, but only to your Father, who is unseen. And your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."
Matthew 6:16–18 (BSB)

Interpretation:

Jesus instructs people about proper fasting. He condemns the abuse of 'hypocritical' fasting (v.6) for those who are not in it for God, but to gain public approval only. Our Lord does not prohibit all fasting, but reveals what motivates truly godly people, to act in a God-pleasing way (v.17-18). In general 'fasting' refers to refraining from food longer than usual. (74)

Application:

The practical application for us as believers is that we do well to follow Christ's instructions here about fasting. Fasting does not have to be solely related to food, but may be done by foregoing some other kind of earthly activity (such as entertainment, culture and the Internet). The goal is to spend quality time with Jesus in Word and prayer and grow in our personal relationship with Him.

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."
Matthew 6:19–21 (BSB)

Interpretation:

In this passage Jesus warns against idolatry, as He says "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth," (v.19) which is an ongoing process that has to be stopped, since it is a form of idolatry, and thus evil. (75) To

guard against this, our Lord calls us to store up “treasures in heaven,” (v20) which reveals the intensions of a person’s heart truly bent towards Jesus.

Application:

At stake here is not how much a person owns, but what that person does, or not do with their earthly possessions. (76) So, a person whose heart’s desire is to serve Christ, will not only be a good steward of what they own, but also share with others, who may be in need of even the basic necessities of life (lacking food, water, shelter and clothing). That way, a person can guard against the love of money which is in itself a form of evil, and unbecoming of a Christian (1 Timothy 6:10).

“The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness! No one can serve two masters: Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.”
Matthew 6:22–24 (BSB)

Interpretation:

In this segment, Jesus expands upon His previous teaching (Matthew 6:19-21) warning against the idolatry inherent in the love of materialism and, here, money (v.24). Our Lord reveals the deeper spiritual reality behind such idolatry. There is a contrast here between ‘good’ eyes (generosity) (v.22) and ‘bad’ eyes (stinginess) (v.23) - the latter disposition of heart, exemplifying a self-deception, running so deep, a person may even think they are acceptable to God, but in reality getting it completely wrong from God’s view point, in other words are spiritually separated from God (v.24). (77)

Application:

The practical application for this passage is a stern and firm warning to all who place their desires and hope fully on earthly things (material objects and money). The only thing that matters to Jesus is a heart that is solely bent toward Him, that is to be “full of light” (v.22), since the only other alternative is to be “full of darkness,” (78) which already indicates a person who is not ‘in it’ for Christ, but only for the temporary (engaging in idolatry)

which in the end - if unrepentant - leads to eternal separation from God (in Hell).

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air: They do not sow or reap or gather into barns—and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? And why do you worry about clothes? Consider how the lilies of the field grow: They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his glory was adorned like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the Gentiles strive after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Today has enough trouble of its own.”
Matthew 6:25–34 (BSB)

Interpretation:

In this last passage in Matthew 6 can be separated into four parts (v.25-27; 28-30; 31-33; 34). At the beginning of every part, Jesus presents the unifying theme of this passage, ‘Do not worry.’

The first part (v.25-27) our Lord *does not* tell us not to plan ahead, or to be lazy, but rather not to fret about life’s basic necessities (food and clothing). The most important aspect here is that Jesus is helping us grow in our walk of faith with God, who not only looks after His own creation (“birds of the air”) but also and especially looks after people (made in His image - ‘Imago Dei’). (79)

In the second part, Jesus encourages all His followers to have faith in Him, as he uses another example from nature (“lilies of the field” in v.28) to show that God cares even more about providing clothing for us (a basic necessity). The point is that unbelief is the root of anxiety. (80)

In the third part, Jesus expands upon the first two parts by revealing the underlying spiritual reality of worrying about food, drink and clothing, namely that not trusting God for all of this is not only displeasing to God, but at core is essentially pagan. (81)

This then culminates in the fourth and last part, where Jesus acknowledges that every day has some worries that are unavoidable (v.34), but He calls us to embrace God's grace to provide for us daily and see us through the daily challenges we face, without fretting about tomorrow. (82)

Application:

The practical application of these four parts is that Jesus not only commands u not to worry, but also encourages us to trust God in faith. Trusting God in every area of life also reveals that we require and acknowledge God's providence (His divine activity and care for His creation). (83)

Our aim as believers is to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness," (Matthew 6:33), which should lead us to share with those fellow Christians who are in need, and also to depend on God for our own needs, instead of fretting about the future. (84) To say it differently:

> Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.
>
> Proverbs 3:5–6 (BSB)

"Do not judge, or you will be judged. For with the same judgment you pronounce, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but fail to notice the beam in your own eye? How can

you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ while there is still a beam in your own eye? You hypocrite! First take the beam out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye. Do not give dogs what is holy; do not throw your pearls before swine. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces.”
Matthew 7:1–6 (BSB)

Interpretation:

In this passage Jesus commands believers not to be judgmental (v.1-2), to be soberly self-discerning (v.3-5) and warns about the need for spiritual discernment about social behaviour in their relationships with other people (v.6). (85) Jesus admonishes us to exercise forgiveness first and foremost, and being aware of our own faults first (“beam in your own eye” in v.3). Only then, with a humble and gentle heart can we even consider helping another person (“then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye” in v.5). However, we must be as Christ instructs us, to be spiritually discerning (v.6), because another person may not embrace the gospel message (“dogs” and “swine”), but reject it and turn against us as believers. (86)

Application:

Jesus’ teaching here about judging others, is first and foremost warning us as Christians not to be prideful and to practice hypocrisy of judgment of others, without first addressing our own sinfulness and propensity toward unforgiveness. This does not mean to be undiscerning about ungodly doctrine or carelessly excusing other people’s evil deeds and actions (see Matthew 6:15-19). It does mean, however, that as believers in a given Christian community, we are to pray and ask the Holy Spirit to help us discern good from evil. (87) Our relationship with others do and should matter to us, and should be characterized by godly behaviour (towards ourselves and others). A fellow Christian should bring us closer to God, bring us closer to others, and help us grow in our personal relationship with God. (88)

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? So if you who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask Him! In everything, then, do to others as you would have them do to you. For this is the essence of the Law and the Prophets.”
Matthew 7:7–12 (BSB)

Interpretation:

Here we see our Lord instructing us about prayer (v.7-8 and 9-11) and the so-called ‘Golden Rule’ (v.12). In the first part about prayer (v.7-8) Jesus reveals to us what our attitude should be as we pray - that to engage in prayer in the first place (“ask”), with a sincere heart (“seek”) and being diligent (“knock”). (89) This is primarily a call to be persistent in our prayers (v.8). In the second part, dealing with prayer (v.9-11) Jesus points out that in our broken human nature (“evil” in v.11, since all of us are born sinners) people usually do not give their children fake or look-alike gifts they request. Prayerfully asking our “Father in heaven” (v.11) then, is done with an expectancy that God will provide only His very best for His children (which, in His divine love (‘agape’), does not mean that God gives us everything we ask for), since God is purely good (all-knowing, all-loving and unchanging). (90)

The ‘Golden Rule’ which is known in other religions in its negative form, is here uniquely given by Jesus in the *positive*. In pointing back to Himself, as fulfillment of the Law (Matthew 5:17) our Lord re-affirms the requirements of God’s kingdom. (91)

Application:

The first two parts about prayer, help us as believers to understand the importance of praying in the first place (since some people don’t pray) and doing so with the right motives and attitude. The life of a Christian should be one of prayer and expectant persistence (see Matthew 6:5-14). The ‘Golden Rule’ then calls us to ‘love our neighbor’ (Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 22:39) and is not simply a catchphrase or slogan, but at the core of the Christian faith. A true follower of Jesus, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, will not only listen to

Christ's words here, putting them into action, but will diligently apply them to their own lives. It is here that our union with Christ becomes part of our effective witness to others. (92)

"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the way that leads to life, and only a few find it."
Matthew 7:13–14 (BSB)

Interpretation:

In this segment, Jesus reveals the most critical aspect of the Sermon on the Mount, namely the admonishment to "enter through the narrow gate," (v.13) the "narrow gate" being Christ Himself. This sets up the conclusion (Matthew 7:13-27) to Jesus' sermon, in which he uses three analogies to explain two possible responses to His gospel message (narrow or broad; good or bad; building on rock or on sand). "Narrow" implies a path that comes with persecution and hardship, whereas "wide" implies the seemingly 'right' way to go, since many 'worldly' people chose it, but in the end it leads to "destruction" (i.e. eternal damnation in hell). (93)

Application:

The application here is crucial to Christians and non-Christians, since heeding Jesus' words has eternal ramifications (heaven or hell). Since Jesus is the "narrow gate" there is no other way to enter heaven, apart from Him (John 14:6; 15:5). Christ's work on the cross, His death and His resurrection are each events that occurred *only once* in human history. Therefore, the choice of entering God's kingdom is one by faith in Jesus Christ and Him only. There is no other way. The choice a person makes is either spending eternity with Jesus in heaven, or spending eternity - in hell, separated from Jesus (John 3:16-21). (94) While not necessarily popular, Jesus is the *only* way!

“Beware of false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. So then, by their fruit you will recognize them.”
Matthew 7:15–20 (BSB)

Interpretation:

In this segment Jesus warns about false prophets in how they appear on the outside (v.15) and how they can be identified as false (v.16-20). False prophets also appear in other parts of the Bible, e.g. Jeremiah 23:9-14; 1 Timothy 1:3-7; Titus 1:10-16. A prophet is basically a person who speaks on behalf of God. “False prophets” (v.15) say that they speak on God’s behalf, when in fact, they do not. They appear a certain way (“sheep’s clothing”) but are evil inside (“ravenous wolves”) and cause destruction amongst God’s people by their teaching and their behaviours. (95) Christ tells us that these false teachers can be recognized by their “fruit” (v.16-20) that is their teaching and/or behaviour. Bible-based and Christ-centred doctrine matters just as much as the fact that God’s people, including teachers, must have a personal relationship with Jesus. (96)

Application:

This teaching of Jesus about “false prophets” is just as important for us today, as it was then, since there are people who distort God’s truth, and teach others simply what they would like to hear (‘ear-ticklers’). This is why every Christian is called to stay close to God in Word (the Bible) and prayer. How else is anyone able to identify, that what is being taught is true? (see Acts 17:10-12).

While not without challenges, there are two ways help in identifying false prophets: One, a false prophet can be recognized by their attitude towards God’s people. Two, a false prophet can be recognized by what they

teach. In the former case, such a person uses the “church” (the community of believers) to promote their own self-interest, possibly only for their own financial gain (see 3 John 9-10). In the latter case, the fruit of their teaching does not result in bringing others closer to Christ, i.e. people becoming more Christ-like. In its most destructive manifestation, the two ways of false teachers, culminate in a type of exclusivism in which other church members are mocked or marginalized. This does not reveal the open-heartedness of our Lord Jesus Christ and is part of our Lord’s warning. (97)

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you workers of lawlessness!’”
Matthew 7:21–23 (BSB)

Interpretation:

Similar to the foregoing text dealing with false teachers, this passage deals with false disciples. In v.21 Jesus clearly states that there will be those who will not enter the kingdom of heaven, simply by having used His name (“Lord, Lord”), but *not* having done God’s will. Our Lord expands on this in v.22 (“that day” refers to Judgment Day) where he calls out those whose hearts are not truly bent towards Him. Jesus’ rebuke (v.23) is a stern warning against those who claim to be His followers, but really are not. As Christ reveals, the big difference between those who enter the kingdom and those who do not is being obedient to do God’s will (v.19). (98)

Application:

The application of this passage for us as Christians is that, there are people who claim to be Christians, but in reality are not. They may appear pious, religious or even do ‘good deeds,’ but their hearts are not in it for Christ, i.e. they are unregenerate. This is both a warning and rebuke of Jesus that should help us as believers to understand that there will be ‘bad apples’ among us this side of heaven. On Judgment Day, though, Jesus will set the record straight, once and for all: This is the final eschatological reality that all

people will face, standing before Jesus Christ. (99) This important final truth is again made clear by Jesus:

> ***“When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, He will sit on His glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate the people one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on His right and the goats on His left. Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave Me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave Me something to drink, I was a stranger and you took Me in, I was naked and you clothed Me, I was sick and you looked after Me, I was in prison and you visited Me.’ Then the righteous will answer Him, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You something to drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? When did we see You sick or in prison and visit You?’ And the King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of Mine, you did for Me.’ Then He will say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave Me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave Me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, I was naked and you did not clothe Me, I was sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.’ And they too will reply, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?’ Then the King will answer, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for Me.’ And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”***
>
> Matthew 25:31–46 (BSB)

“Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain fell, the torrents raged, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because its foundation was on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on

them is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain fell, the torrents raged, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell—and great was its collapse!”
Matthew 7:24–27 (BSB)

Interpretation:

Here, Jesus (similar to His admonition of entering through the “narrow gate” in Matthew 7:13-14) calls for a decision, by using a contrast (wise builder versus foolish builder). The wise builder hear Christ’s words, takes them to heart and acts upon them using godly wisdom (v.24-25). The foolish builder also hears Christ’s words, *does not* take them to heart and acts without godly wisdom (“building on sand” in v. 26, without a solid foundation) which ultimately leads to destruction (v.26-27). As a symbolic representation the “rock” (v.24, 25) can be seen as connected to Christ’s words “these words of mine.” (100) Thus, following Christ stands or falls on hearing His words and acting upon them, which is the difference between heaven and hell.

Application:

As the Sermon on the Mount comes to a conclusion here, Jesus does not mince any words and firmly warns about the eternal consequences of heaven and hell. Since Jesus speaks more about hell than heaven in His teachings, we become aware of the stark reality of both. Jesus’ teaching is designed to divide people into two groups, namely those who recognize who He is (‘God in the Flesh’) and follow Him, and those who do not recognize Him and reject Him. There is no middle ground here. The point of Jesus’ concluding teaching and illustration is that those who hear His words, and put them into practice, are His true followers. This does not mean doing apparent ‘good deeds’ in order to earn our salvation, but rather that a believer will act on Christ’s Words, as a result of a repentant heart, truly bent toward Him (see James 1:22-27; 2:14-16). Those are all of us believers, the ‘wise builders.’ (101)

When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were astonished at His teaching, because He taught as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.
Matthew 7:26–29 (BSB)

Interpretation:

In this passage, ending the Sermon on the Mount, we learn about Jesus' authority. As Jesus stops speaking, we get a glimpse of the authority of our Lord's Words, manifested in how the crowds respond (v.28), being "astonished at His teachings." The reason for this is found in v.29, because Jesus' teaching is not only different than that of the "scribes," but also a teaching of true authority. Unlike Jesus, the "scribes," (i.e. the teachers of religious law) had a certain authority in the sight of men, since they used Scripture or quotations from other rabbis to support their own viewpoints. While Jesus does quote Scripture on rare occasions, He does not speak on the authority of others. (102) (103) This points to Jesus' absolute divinity, since he often quotes the Old Testament in order to offer His own authoritative re-interpretation. (104)

Application:

As Christians, when we read the Sermon on the Mount, carefully and prayerfully, guided by the Holy Spirit, we are just as astounded or amazed at our Lord's authority. There are so many different aspects about this sermon which are absolutely unique in the history of mankind, and as believers we do well to reflect upon our Lord's teaching as they instruct us, challenge us, admonish us and encourage us. Christ's teaching continues God's wisdom, grace and His authority, pointing us to Himself and His atoning work on the cross to save us. (105) As such, Jesus' teaching and His words are not only authoritative, but reveal to us the deficiencies of our heart, our being and our lives that can only find their fulfillment in truly following Christ and Him alone:

> ***"Truly, truly, I tell you, whoever hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life and will not come under judgment. Indeed, he has crossed over from death to life."***
>
> John 5:24 (BSB)

Conclusion:

To sum up, we realize that Jesus' Sermon on the Mount is more than just a man-made teaching, but actually reveals the divine nature and

purpose of God's Word as it is expressed in and through our Lord Jesus Christ. This sermon helps us understand who Jesus is (as 'God in the Flesh') and the grace He provides for us. (106)

As seen, we learn not only about practical ways of living life as Christians in a fallen world, such as ethical behaviour, 'dealing' with persecution and hardship, but also how to honor and glorify God with our lives. As such, most of what Jesus teaches us applies to all Christians in all situations of life, unless the Bible specifically sets forth limitations. (107)

There are certain things, such as 'fulfilling the law and the prophets' (Matthew 5:17-20), only Jesus can do, since He is the Messiah. Likewise, only Jesus is the one who can truly interpret Old Testament law, fulfill its purpose and instruct us best, thereby demonstrating His unique authority and inaugurating God's kingdom. (108)

What we can and must do as Christ's followers is recognize our inability, insufficiency, and helplessness (if we attempt to do things in our own strength, apart from our Lord - see John 15:5) to serve our mighty and holy Heavenly Father, who call us to:

> ***"Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."***
>
> Matthew 5:48 (BSB)

This awareness of inadequacy keeps us repentant, humble, and surrendered to Jesus (as seen in the Beatitudes - Matthew 5:3-12) realizing that all of us fall short of living up to Christ's ethical ideal. (109) However, once we have fully surrendered to and embraced Christ, and let Him work in and through us through the Person and Power of the Holy Spirit, we let Him take care of our needs (food, water, shelter, clothing) and let Him guide us how to share the gospel with others. (110)

Notes

(1) Hunter, Drew. *Knowing the Bible: The Sermon on the Mount, A 12-Week Study*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2023, p.10.
(2) Nelson, Thomas. *NIV Chronological Study Bible*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2014., p.1121.

(3) Blomberg, Craig L. *A Handbook of New Testament Exegesis*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010., p.96.
(4) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009., p.287.
(5) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.159.
(6) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.154.
(7) Grudem, Wayne, ed. *ESV Study Bible*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008., 2023., p.1827.
(8) Grudem, Wayne, ed. *ESV Study Bible*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008., 2023., p.1827.
(9)) Hunter, Drew. *Knowing the Bible: The Sermon on the Mount, A 12-Week Study*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2023, p.15.
(10) Grudem, Wayne, ed. *ESV Study Bible*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008., 2023., p.1827.
(11) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.200.
(12) Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007., p.20.
(13) Carson, D. A. ed. *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015., p.1937.
(14) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009., p.288.
(15) Sproul, R.C. "How Can I Be Blessed?" *Crucial Questions, No.24*. First Edition. Orlando, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2016. e-book
(16) Sproul, R.C. "How Can I Be Blessed?" *Crucial Questions, No.24*. First Edition. Orlando, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2016. e-book
(17) Carson, D. A. *Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and His Confrontation with the World: A Study of Matthew 5-10*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2018., p.25.
(18) Sproul, R.C. "How Can I Be Blessed?" *Crucial Questions, No.24*. First Edition. Orlando, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2016. e-book
(19) Sproul, R.C. "How Can I Be Blessed?" *Crucial Questions, No.24*. First Edition. Orlando, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2016. e-book
(20) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.165.
(21) Carson, D. A. *Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and His Confrontation with the World: A Study of Matthew 5-10*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2018., p.32-33.
(22) Carson, D. A. *Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and His Confrontation with the World: A Study of Matthew 5-10*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2018., p.34-35.

(23)) Hunter, Drew. *Knowing the Bible: The Sermon on the Mount, A 12-Week Study*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2023, p.21.
(24) Carson, D. A. *Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and His Confrontation with the World: A Study of Matthew 5-10*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2018., p.37-38.
(25) Carson, D. A. ed. *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015., p.1938.
(26) Bartholomew, Craig G., Daniel J. Treier, Kevin Jon Vanhoozer, and Nicholas Thomas Wright. *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005., p.737.
(27) Miller, R.B. "Sermon on the Mount." In vol. 4 of *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*. James Orr. General Editor. Chicago, IL: Howard-Severance Company, 1915, p.2732-2736.
(28)) Hunter, Drew. *Knowing the Bible: The Sermon on the Mount, A 12-Week Study*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2023, p.24.
(29) Carson, D. A. *Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and His Confrontation with the World: A Study of Matthew 5-10*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2018., p.43.
(30) Moo, Douglas J. "Jesus and the Authority of the Mosaic Law." In *JSNT*, Volume 7, Issue 20. p.24.
(31) Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020., p.277.
(32) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.178.
(33) Carson, D. A. *Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and His Confrontation with the World: A Study of Matthew 5-10*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2018., p.46-47.
(34) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.178.
(35) Moo, Douglas J. "Jesus and the Authority of the Mosaic Law." In *JSNT*, Volume 7, Issue 20. p.26-27.
(36) Moo, Douglas J. "Jesus and the Authority of the Mosaic Law." In *JSNT*, Volume 7, Issue 20. p.28.
(37) Moo, Douglas J. "Jesus and the Authority of the Mosaic Law." In *JSNT*, Volume 7, Issue 20. p.30.
(38) Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007., p.21.
(39) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.180.
(40) Carson, D. A. *Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and His Confrontation with the World: A Study of Matthew 5-10*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2018., p.51-52
(41) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.200.

(42) Stein, Robert H. *The Method and Message of Jesus' teachings* (revised edition). Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994, p.107.
(43) Saldarini, Anthony J. 2003. “Matthew.” In *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible*, edited by James D. G. Dunn and John W. Rogerson, 1013–19. Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. Logos Bible Software.
(44) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009., p.290.
(45) Schreiner, Thomas R. *40 Questions about Christians and Biblical Law*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2010. p.165.
(46) Miller, R.B. "Sermon on the Mount." In vol. 4 of *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*. James Orr. General Editor. Chicago, IL: Howard-Severance Company, 1915, p.2732-2736.
(47)) Hunter, Drew. *Knowing the Bible: The Sermon on the Mount, A 12-Week Study*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2023, p.33, 36.
(48) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.184-185.
(49) Carson, D. A. *Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and His Confrontation with the World: A Study of Matthew 5-10*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2018., p.57-58.
(50) Carson, D. A. *Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and His Confrontation with the World: A Study of Matthew 5-10*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2018., p.58.
(51) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.186.
(52) Schreiner, Thomas R. *40 Questions about Christians and Biblical Law*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2010. p.166.
(53) Carson, D. A. ed. *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015., p.1939.
(54) Schreiner, Thomas R. *40 Questions about Christians and Biblical Law*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2010. p.166-167.
(55) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009., p.292.
(56) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.187-188.
(57) Carson, D. A. *Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and His Confrontation with the World: A Study of Matthew 5-10*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2018., p.62-65.
(58) Carson, D. A. *Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and His Confrontation with the World: A Study of Matthew 5-10*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2018., p.65-66.
(59) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009., p.292-293.

(60) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.191.
(61) Saldarini, Anthony J. 2003. “Matthew.” In *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible*, edited by James D. G. Dunn and John W. Rogerson, 1013–19. Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. Logos Bible Software.
(62) Schreiner, Thomas R. *40 Questions about Christians and Biblical Law*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2010. p.169.
(63) Stein, Robert H. *The Method and Message of Jesus' teachings* (revised edition). Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994, p.101.
(64) Nelson, Thomas. *NIV Chronological Study Bible*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2014., p.1125.
(65) Carson, D. A. ed. *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015., p.1940.
(66)) Hunter, Drew. *Knowing the Bible: The Sermon on the Mount, A 12-Week Study*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2023, p.59.
(67) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.199.
(68) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.199.
(69) Carson, D. A. ed. *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015., p.1940-1941.
(70) Carson, D. A. *Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and His Confrontation with the World: A Study of Matthew 5-10*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2018., p.83-93.
(71) Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008., p.64.
(72) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009., p.294.
(73) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.202-203.
(74) Carson, D. A. ed. *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015., p.1941.
(75) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.211.
(76) Carson, D. A. ed. *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015., p.1941.
(77) Carson, D. A. ed. *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015., p.1941.
(78) Carson, D. A. *Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and His Confrontation with the World: A Study of Matthew 5-10*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2018., p.103-104.

(79) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.215.
(80) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.216.
(81) Carson, D. A. *Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and His Confrontation with the World: A Study of Matthew 5-10*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2018., p.118-119.
(82) Carson, D. A. *Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and His Confrontation with the World: A Study of Matthew 5-10*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2018., p.124.
(83)) Hunter, Drew. *Knowing the Bible: The Sermon on the Mount, A 12-Week Study*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2023, p.76-77.
(84) Carson, D. A. ed. *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015., p.1942.
(85) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009., p.294.
(86) Sproul, R. C., ed. *The Reformation Study Bible: English Standard Version (2015 Edition)*. Orlando, FL: Reformation Trust, 2015, p.1682.
(87)) Hunter, Drew. *Knowing the Bible: The Sermon on the Mount, A 12-Week Study*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2023, p.80-81
(88) Cloud, Henry and John Sims Townsend. *Safe People: How to Find Relationships That Are Good for You and Avoid Those That Aren't*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016., p.143.
(89) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.222.
(90) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.222-223.
(91) Carson, D. A. *Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and His Confrontation with the World: A Study of Matthew 5-10*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2018., p.147-148.
(92) Meyer, F. B. *Inherit the Kingdom: Meditations on the Sermon on the Mount*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1984, p.158-159.
(93) Carson, D. A. ed. *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015., p.1943.
(94) Ferguson, Sinclair B. *Kingdom Life in a Fallen World: Living out the Sermon on the Mount*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1986, p.212.
(95) Carson, D. A. ed. *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015., p.1943.
(96) Carson, D. A. ed. *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015., p.1943.
(97) Ferguson, Sinclair B. *Kingdom Life in a Fallen World: Living out the Sermon on the Mount*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1986, p.219-221.

(98) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.229.
(99) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.229-230.
(100) Carson, D. A. *Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and His Confrontation with the World: A Study of Matthew 5-10*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2018., p.175-176.
(101)) Hunter, Drew. *Knowing the Bible: The Sermon on the Mount, A 12-Week Study*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2023, p.97-98.
(102) Carson, D. A. ed. *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015., p.1943.
(103) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.232.
(104) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009., p.295.
(105)) Hunter, Drew. *Knowing the Bible: The Sermon on the Mount, A 12-Week Study*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2023, p.98-100
(106) Bartholomew, Craig G., Daniel J. Treier, Kevin Jon Vanhoozer, and Nicholas Thomas Wright. *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005., p.737.
(107) Klein, William W., et al. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017., p.523.
(108) Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020., p.277.
(109) Carson, D. A. ed. *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015., p.1937.
(110) Stanley, Charles F. C*harles Stanley's Handbook for Christian living: Biblical Answers to Life's Tough Questions*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2008., p.139.

Bibliography

Bartholomew, Craig G., Daniel J. Treier, Kevin Jon Vanhoozer, and Nicholas Thomas Wright. *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005.

Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007.

Blomberg, Craig L. *A Handbook of New Testament Exegesis*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010.

Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009.

Carson, D. A. *Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and His Confrontation with the World: A Study of Matthew 5-10*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2018.

Carson, D. A. ed. *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015.

Cloud, Henry and John Sims Townsend. *Safe People: How to Find Relationships That Are Good for You and Avoid Those That Aren't*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016.

Ferguson, Sinclair B. *Kingdom Life in a Fallen World: Living out the Sermon on the Mount*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1986.

Grudem, Wayne, ed. *ESV Study Bible*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008., 2023.

Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012.

Hunter, Drew. *Knowing the Bible: The Sermon on the Mount, A 12-Week Study*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2023.

Klein, William W., et al. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017.

Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.

Meyer, F. B. *Inherit the Kingdom: Meditations on the Sermon on the Mount*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1984.

Miller, R.B. "Sermon on the Mount." In vol. 4 of *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*. James Orr. General Editor. Chicago, IL: Howard-Severance Company, 1915., p.2732-2736.

Moo, Douglas J. "Jesus and the Authority of the Mosaic Law." In *JSNT*, Volume 7, Issue 20. p.3-49.

Nelson, Thomas. *NIV Chronological Study Bible*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2014.

Nelson's Complete Book Of Bible Maps And Charts, 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010.

Saldarini, Anthony J. 2003. “Matthew.” In *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible*, edited by James D. G. Dunn and John W. Rogerson, 1013–19. Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. Logos Bible Software.

Schreiner, Thomas R. *40 Questions about Christians and Biblical Law*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2010.

Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008., p.64.

Sproul, R.C. "How Can I Be Blessed?" *Crucial Questions, No.24*. First Edition. Orlando, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2016. e-book.

Sproul, R. C., ed. *The Reformation Study Bible: English Standard Version (2015 Edition)*. Orlando, FL: Reformation Trust, 2015.

Stanley, Charles F. C*harles Stanley's Handbook for Christian living: Biblical Answers to Life's Tough Questions*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2008.

Stein, Robert H. *The Method and Message of Jesus' teachings* (revised edition). Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994.

Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020.

<u>For Further Study</u>

Carson, D. A. *Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and His Confrontation with the World: A Study of Matthew 5-10*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2018.

Hunter, Drew. *Knowing the Bible: The Sermon on the Mount, A 12-Week Study*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2023.

Lloyd-Jones, D. Martyn. Studies In The Sermon On The Mount. Vol.1. London, UK: Inter Varsity, 1962.

Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.

Sproul, R.C. "How Can I Be Blessed?" *Crucial Questions, No.24*. First Edition. Orlando, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2016. e-book.

Stott, John. The Message of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7): Christian Counter-Culture. Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1985.

Jesus' Sermon on the Mount
(Outline)

Matthew - Chapter 5

- The Sermon on the Mount (v.1-2)
- Beatitudes (v.3-10, 11-12)
- Salt and Light (v.13-16)
- The Fulfilment of the Law (v.17-20)
- Anger and Reconciliation (v.21-26)
- Adultery (v.27-30)
- Divorce (v.31-32)
- Oaths and Vows (v.33-37)
- Love Your Enemies (v.38-48)

Matthew - Chapter 6

- Giving to the Needy (v.1-4)
- The Lord’s Prayer (v.5-15)
- Proper Fasting (v.16-18)
- Treasures in Heaven (v.19-21)
- The Lamp of the Body (v.22-24)
- Do Not Worry (v.25-34)

Matthew - Chapter 7

- Judging Others (v.1-6)
- Ask, Seek, Knock & ‘Golden Rule’ (v.7-12)
- The Narrow Gate (v. 13-14)
- A tree and its Fruit (v.15-23)
- The House on the Rock (v.24-27)
- The Authority of Jesus (v.28-29)

The Main Parts and Their Meaning of The Sermon On The Mount
(a):

These are the blessings of Christians living as citizens of Christ’s kingdom.
(Matthew 5:3-12)

How Christians can impact the world through their actions.
(Matthew 5:13-15)

Going into the richer meaning of God’s law.
(Matthew 5:17-48)

The true intentions for giving, praying and fasting.
(Matthew 6:1-18)

Christians serving God and His kingdom with sincere hearts are freed from anxiety over less important things.
(Matthew 6:19-34)

We are never to judge others.
(Matthew 7:1-6)

Prayer is a privilege and brings blessings.
(Matthew 7:7-12)

Following the narrow way (that is Jesus) is best, because the broad way leads to death.
(Matthew 7:13-14)

How to recognize people by their fruits.
(Matthew 7:15-20)

It is always better to obey God and not just talk about it.
(Matthew 7:21-29)

(a) Adapted from *Nelson's Complete Book Of Bible Maps And Charts*, 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010., p.307.

Amen.

The Transfiguration of Jesus Christ

For we did not follow cleverly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to Him from the Majestic Glory, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” And we ourselves heard this voice from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.
2 Peter 1:16–18 (BSB)

Introduction:

The transfiguration of Jesus Christ is one of the most unique and significant events in the life and ministry of our Lord. As we see in the above passage, the older Apostle Peter shares his eyewitness account of the transfiguration in his second letter. The actual event of the transfiguration is recorded in three gospels (Matthew 17:1-13; Mark 9:1-13; and Luke 9:27-36) along with the above passage from Peter (2 Peter 1:16-18).

On an unspecified mountain (1) with three selected disciples (Peter, James and John), Jesus is visibly glorified, “transfigured” (from the Latin translation of the Greek work ‘metamorphoō’ - which means “to change into another form”). (2) While the change of Christ’s appearance is actual and physical, it is also part of a visionary revelation of Jesus’ divine glory originating in His incarnation (John 1:14). (3)

The following is an exploration of this event, as to what it means. There are four parts in total. The first three provide a commentary on the events as they are recorded in Matthew, Mark and Luke, and the fourth part is an expanded commentary on the later eyewitness testimony of Peter - along with further insights of the Apostle - recorded in his second letter (2 Peter 1:16-21).

The Transfiguration in Matthew 17:1-13

After six days Jesus took with Him Peter, James, and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. There He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. Suddenly Moses and Elijah appeared before them, talking with Jesus. Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If You wish, I will put up three shelters —one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." While Peter was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Listen to Him!" When the disciples heard this, they fell facedown in terror. Then Jesus came over and touched them. *"Get up,"* He said. *"Do not be afraid."* And when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus. As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, *"Do not tell anyone about this vision until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."* The disciples asked Him, "Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" Jesus replied, *"Elijah does indeed come, and he will restore all things. But I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but have done to him whatever they wished. In the same way, the Son of Man will suffer at their hands."* Then the disciples understood that He was speaking to them about John the Baptist.
Matthew 17:1–13 (BSB)

Commentary:

The transfiguration as recorded in Matthew shows us how this event comes about. The "six days" (v.1) likely indicates how long it took to get from one place to another, in this case Jesus leading His inner circle (the disciples Peter, James and John) up to an unspecified "high mountain" (v.1). (4) The transfiguration of Christ's face shinning like the sun and His clothes becoming "as white as the light" indicates a change from the inside out, that is a change of our Lord's body Himself, becoming outwardly visible, providing them with a glimpse of his preincarnate glory (5) - and a taste of his future exaltation. (6)

The appearance of Moses and Elijah (v.3), as representatives of the Law and the Prophets, respectively, are important witnesses to Jesus Christ as the Messiah, since He is the one fulfilling the Old Testament (Matthew 5:17). (7)

As Peter is talking to Jesus, a “bright cloud” (v.6) envelopes them, which recalls the ‘Shekinah’ glory of God’s nearness to His people (Exodus 40:34); similarly, God expresses His closeness to Moses in a vision of God’s glory at Sinai (Exodus 31:18) and to Elijah at Horeb (1 Kings 19:8), yet now, Jesus’ transfiguration radiates the glory of His deity. (8) God’s voice coming from the cloud (v.5) reminds us of the event of Jesus’ baptism, where God likewise endorses Christ as His beloved son, thereby affirming our Lord’s deity and helping the disciples grasp His messianic purpose. (9)

As Jesus reassures them not to be afraid (v.7), He explains to them how the transfiguration (“vision” in v.9) relates to His pending crucifixion, death and resurrection. Along with admonishing the disciples to silence about His coming suffering - going down the mountain - Jesus’s glory is veiled. (10) In the last part (v.10-13) Jesus explains to the disciples that the messianic forerunner, Elijah, has already come, manifested in John the Baptist. (11)

The Transfiguration in Mark 9:1-13

Then Jesus said to them, *“Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God arrive with power.”* After six days Jesus took with Him Peter, James, and John, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. There He was transfigured before them. His clothes became radiantly white, brighter than any launderer on earth could bleach them. And Elijah and Moses appeared before them, talking with Jesus. Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters —one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” For they were all so terrified that Peter did not know what else to say. Then a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and a voice came from the cloud: “This is My beloved Son. Listen to Him!” Suddenly, when they looked around, they saw no one with them except Jesus. As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus admonished them not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. So they kept this matter to themselves, discussing what it meant to rise from the dead. And they asked Jesus, “Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?” He replied, *“Elijah does indeed come first, and he restores all things. Why then is it written that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected? But I tell you that Elijah has indeed come, and they have done to him whatever they wished, just as it is written about him.”*
Mark 9:1–13 (BSB)

Commentary:

The transfiguration account in Mark's gospel is similar to Matthew. Yet, in v.1 we have an important detail not mentioned in Matthew, which is Jesus' foregoing prediction being fulfilled in the transfiguration. (12) What should be mentioned here is that in extrabiblical Jewish literature, the expected Old Testament precursors are not Moses and Elijah - nevertheless, it is likely that the transfiguration narrative is reminiscent of Malachi 4:4-6. (13) Also, the Old Testament events surrounding Moses in Exodus 24:15-16 provide a close parallel to the transfiguration of Jesus. (14) The voice of God out of the cloud ("Listen to him") recalls Deuteronomy 18:15, 18 revealing Moses as a leader and prophet. (15)

As Jesus explains the significance of John the Baptist, fulfilling the role of Elijah ("he restores all things" in v.12) - this restoring primarily refers to calling people to repentance; connected to this, is Jesus' referring to His own suffering (as "Son of Man" in v.12) likely alluding to Isaiah 53:3 talking about the Messiah as suffering servant. (16) What matters most here is that, along with the preceding witnesses of John the Baptist (Mark 1:9-11), the witness of Elijah and Moses and God Himself confirm Old Testament promises about the Messiah being fulfilled as they all point to Jesus Christ, as the Messiah. (17)

The Transfiguration in Luke 9:27-36

"But I tell you truthfully, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God." **About eight days after Jesus had said these things, He took with Him Peter, John, and James, and went up on a mountain to pray. And as He was praying, the appearance of His face changed, and His clothes became radiantly white. Suddenly two men, Moses and Elijah, began talking with Jesus. They appeared in glory and spoke about His departure, which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. Meanwhile Peter and his companions were overcome by sleep, but when they awoke, they saw Jesus' glory and the two men standing with Him. As Moses and Elijah were leaving, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters —one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." (He did not know what he was saying.) While Peter was speaking, a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. And a voice came from the cloud, saying, "This is My Son, whom I have chosen. Listen**

to Him!" After the voice had spoken, only Jesus was present with them. The disciples kept this to themselves, and in those days they did not tell anyone what they had seen.
Luke 9:27–36 (BSB)

Commentary:

Related to the other Gospel accounts and yet unique in many details, the transfiguration as recorded in Luke, provides us with a more rounded picture of Jesus and His mission. As such, the transfiguration is a representation of the fulfillment of Jesus' words about His own coming. (18) The fact that Jesus prays (v.28-29) shows us evidence of his piety (19), and His unique relationship to God the Father, since the Bible does tell us that Jesus often prays in seclusion from others (Matthew 14:23; Mark 6:46).

As Jesus prays, His face changes, and *then* His clothes become "radiantly white," (v.29) which shows that the transfiguration is from the inside out, and not any other way. (20) Only Luke records the detail of Jesus' 'departure' (Greek: exodos) in Jerusalem (v.31) as He is talking with Moses and Elijah (v.30) - which most likely refers to Christ's death, resurrection and ascension. (21) The allusion to the Old Testament exodus is enhanced by the presence of Moses. (22)

Peter's offer to "put up three shelters," (v.33) relates to the practice of constructing such huts at the Jewish festival of tabernacles (booths) (Leviticus 23:33-43; Exodus 23:16; 34:22; Deuteronomy 16:13-16), yet God's voice clarifies that Jesus as God's Son is unique and above and beyond Moses and Elijah. (23)

The Testimony of Peter about Jesus' Transfiguration in 2 Peter 1:16-21

For we did not follow cleverly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to Him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And we ourselves heard this voice from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. We also have the word of the prophets as

confirmed beyond doubt. And you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture comes from one's own interpretation. For no such prophecy was ever brought forth by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.
2 Peter 1:16–21 (BSB)

Commentary:

While the disciples, at the time, did not tell anyone about their experience of Jesus' transfiguration (Luke 9:36), this changed following Christ's resurrection and ascension, as we can see in the above passage, in which an older Peter writes about this event. Here we have Peter's eyewitness testimony, that in conjunction with the three Gospel witnesses, creates a solid factual chain pointing to the transfiguration as a real event. (24)

What also attests to the authenticity of the transfiguration is the simplicity in which the Gospel writers and Peter, in this passage here, relate to the event. (25) All the elements in Peter's passage (Jesus' receiving God's glory, God's voice, God's words and the unspecified mountain location) attest to the authenticity of the event.

Peter links his eyewitness testimony to the Old Testament prophetic message (v.19) of the "day" dawning, that is the day of the Lord - with God saving His people and judging those who reject Him - and the "morning star" (see Numbers 24:17; Revelation 22:16) referring to Christ's return, by means of a night-day (dark-light) contrast. (26) The Person and power of the Holy Spirit rounds off this passage, as Peter connects all Scripture (God's Word) to the person of Jesus Christ. Thereby, Peter affirms that - unlike all other man-made 'religions,' the gospel of Christ is true, just as all the events witnessed, that is Christ's life, transfiguration, death, resurrection and ascension - Jesus is the Messiah and the only way to be saved. (27)

Conclusion:

To sum up, we realize that, not only is Christ's transfiguration a real event, it really happened in accordance with the Gospel and others eyewitnesses accounts (2 Peter 1:16-21), but also that the transfiguration uniquely and directly points to Christ as the Messiah.

As seen, Jesus has an inner circle of trusted disciples (Peter, James and John) to whom He reveals Himself at the transfiguration - who are also present as Jesus raises Jairus's daughter (Mark 5:37-43) and with Jesus in Gethsemane (Mark 14:33). (28) These three witnesses (His inner circle) at the time, are also those to whom Jesus reveals the heavenly witnesses as He communicates with Moses and Elijah. However, in Christ, this Old Testament revelation has been fulfilled. (29) By His own transformation, at the transfiguration, Jesus' deity is revealed, and confirmed by God's voice from the cloud. (30)

Also, as recorded in Luke, we learn about Jesus' 'departure' (Greek: exodos) which, taking place at Jerusalem refers to Christ's death, resurrection and ascension. (31) This means that Jesus' death was not a mistake or tragedy, but part of God's sovereign divine plan to be fulfilled in and through Christ. (32) The cross of Christ is a necessity - Jesus having been divinely approved as sin bearer for all believers - with the transfiguration inseparably linking His suffering with God's glory, hinting at the later resurrection body of Christ.

While told to be silent about the transfiguration event at the time, after the resurrection following Pentecost, Peter, James and John proclaimed this event (2 Peter 1:17) along with the good news. (34) Practically, for us as believers, the transfiguration is a reminder of the suffering we often face, but gives us hope and helps us persevere and endure during difficult times, since we are reminded - like the disciples at this event - to listen to, heed and follow Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. (35)

Notes

(1) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.836-842.
(2) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011., p.1479.
(3) Nelson, Thomas. *NIV Chronological Study Bible*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2014., p.1163.
(4) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.436-442.
(5) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.436-442.

(6) Grudem, Wayne, ed. *ESV Study Bible*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008.,p.1856.
(7) Grudem, Wayne, ed. *ESV Study Bible*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008.,p.1856.
(8) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.436-442.
(9) Grudem, Wayne, ed. *ESV Study Bible*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008.,p.1857.
(10) Packer, J. I. *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1993., p.140.
(11) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.214.
(12) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.169.
(13) Duvall, J. Scott, and J. Daniel Hays, eds. *The Baker Illustrated Bible Background Commentary.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2020., p.883-884.
(14) Duvall, J. Scott, and J. Daniel Hays, eds. *The Baker Illustrated Bible Background Commentary.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2020., p.883-884.
(15) Grudem, Wayne, ed. *ESV Study Bible*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008.,p.1911.
(16) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.836-842.
(17) Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020., p.229.
(18) Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008., p.807.
(19) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.257.
(20) Stein, Robert H. *Luke*. The New American Commentary: Volume 24. Nashville, TN: B&H, 1992., p.284.
(21) Packer, J. I. *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1993., p.140.
(22) Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007., p.312.
(23) Stein, Robert H. *Luke*. The New American Commentary: Volume 24. Nashville, TN: B&H, 1992., p.285.
(24) Stein, Robert H. *Luke*. The New American Commentary: Volume 24. Nashville, TN: B&H, 1992., p.283.
(25) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011., p.1479.
(26) Carson, D. A. ed. *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015., 1949, 2021., p.2553.
(27) Stanley, Charles F. *The Charles F. Stanley Life Principles Bible*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2017., p.1798.

(28) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.836-842.
(29) Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010., p.836-842.
(30) Packer, J. I. *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1993., p.139-140.
(31) Grudem, Wayne, ed. *ESV Study Bible*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008.,p.1973.
(32) Stein, Robert H. *Luke*. The New American Commentary: Volume 24. Nashville, TN: B&H, 1992., p.287.
(33) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011., p.1479.
(34) Grudem, Wayne, ed. *ESV Study Bible*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008.,p.1973.
(35) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009., p.324.

Bibliography

Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007.

Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009.

Carson, D. A. ed. *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015.

Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011.

Duvall, J. Scott, and J. Daniel Hays, eds. *The Baker Illustrated Bible Background Commentary.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2020.

Grudem, Wayne, ed. *ESV Study Bible*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008.

Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012.

Longman, Tremper, David E. Garland, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew & Mark*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.

Nelson, Thomas. *NIV Chronological Study Bible*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2014.

Packer, J. I. *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1993.

Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008.

Stanley, Charles F. *The Charles F. Stanley Life Principles Bible*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2017.

Stein, Robert H. *Luke*. The New American Commentary: Volume 24. Nashville, TN: B&H, 1992.

Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020.

Introduction:

Throughout the Gospel of John, Jesus uses several “I AM” (Greek: ego eimi) statements, seven of these to which He connects seven metaphors, which are expressions pointing to His divinity and role as Savior (1):

“I am the Bread of Life” (John 6:35, 41, 48, 51)

“I am the Light of the World” (John 8:12)

“I am the Gate of the Sheep” (John 10:7, 9)

“I am the Good Shepherd” (John 10:11, 14)

“I am the Resurrection and the Life” (John 11:25)

“I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life” (John 14:6)

“I am the true Vine” (John 15:1, 5)

These seven metaphorical statements use common everyday images to convey significant theological truth. (2) This is a confirmation of Jesus Christ as Messiah, since He is rooted in history, primarily the Old Testament: It is here that we find Old Testament allusions connected to Jesus’ “I AM” sayings, such as bread (Exodus 16:4; Psalm 78:24), shepherd (Ezekiel 34) and vine (Isaiah 5:1-7) - the shepherd image being the fulfillment as Israel’s Kingly Messiah and Savior of all believers. (3)

The following provides an overview of all seven “I AM” statements of Jesus, as they are embedded in different dialogues with people and individuals. The goal is to understand what Jesus is communicating here and what this means for us as believers, and those who do not believe.

“I am the bread of life” (John 6:35, 41, 48, 51)

The next day, the crowd that had remained on the other side of the sea realized that only one boat had been there, and that Jesus had not boarded it

with His disciples, but they had gone away alone. However, some boats from Tiberias landed near the place where the people had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. So when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor His disciples were there, they got into the boats and went to Capernaum to look for Him. When they found Him on the other side of the sea, they asked Him, “Rabbi, when did You get here?” Jesus replied, “Truly, truly, I tell you, it is not because you saw these signs that you are looking for Me, but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. Do not work for food that perishes, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on Him God the Father has placed His seal of approval.” Then they inquired, “What must we do to perform the works of God?” Jesus replied, “The work of God is this: to believe in the One He has sent.” So they asked Him, “What sign then will You perform, so that we may see it and believe You? What will You do? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, as it is written: ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’” Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is My Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” “Sir,” they said, “give us this bread at all times.” Jesus answered, “***I am the bread of life.*** Whoever comes to Me will never hunger, and whoever believes in Me will never thirst. But as I stated, you have seen Me and still you do not believe. Everyone the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will never drive away. For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but to do the will of Him who sent Me. And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that I shall lose none of those He has given Me, but raise them up at the last day. For it is My Father’s will that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in Him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.” At this, the Jews began to grumble about Jesus because He had said, ***“I am the bread that came down from heaven.”*** They were asking, “Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How then can He say, ‘I have come down from heaven?’ ” “Stop grumbling among yourselves,” Jesus replied. “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the Prophets: ‘And they will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who has heard the Father and learned from Him comes to Me— not that anyone has seen the Father except the One who is from God; only He has seen the Father. Truly, truly, I tell you, he who believes has eternal life. ***I am the bread of life.*** Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, yet they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that anyone may eat of it and not die. ***I am the living bread that came down from heaven.*** If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And this bread, which I will give for the life of the world, is My flesh.” At this, the Jews began to argue among themselves, “How can this man give us His flesh to eat?” So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is real food,

and My blood is real drink. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood remains in Me, and I in him. Just as the living Father sent Me and I live because of the Father, so also the one who feeds on Me will live because of Me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Unlike your fathers, who ate the manna and died, the one who eats this bread will live forever.” Jesus said this while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum.
John 6:22–59 (BSB)

Commentary:

In this first of Jesus’ I AM sayings (found in v. 35, 41, 48, 51), Jesus has just performed the miracle of feeding five thousand people the previous day, near the sea of Galilee (i.e. Sea of Tiberias, aka. ‘Lake Gennesaret’) (John 6:1-21). A crowd of people follows Him to Capernaum, where He engages in a heated dialogue using the bread metaphor to point to Himself as Messiah, and - consequently - those who reject Him abandon Him in the closing sequence of this chapter (John 6:60-71) - the crowd hears Jesus’ voice and yet does not believe in Him. (4)

What is happening here is that Jesus is trying to reach the hearts of people, over and over again, as He uses the words “truly, truly” (v.26, 32, 47, 53) in an attempt to get them to listen and embrace His words. Jesus is preaching here in the synagogue at Capernaum and correcting the misunderstandings of the people, as they request a sign of Jesus (which He just performed the previous day in the miracle of feeding the five thousand) - the point Jesus is making here (v.32) is that it was not Moses, but God who supplied the Jewish ancestors with bread in the wilderness. (5)

Also, Jesus identifies Himself as the source of spiritual life (v.35-37), but the crowd rises up against Him in protest, since they are only able to perceive Jesus as merely human (v.41-43) and yet Jesus makes it clear that He is the Messiah (v.47-48). (6)

When Jesus uses eating and drinking metaphors, for believing in his (pending) sacrificial death (v.51, 53-54) there is an apostasy among many of Jesus’ disciples, since they turn away. (7) It is at this point we realize, that even though Jesus has expanded upon the “I Am” (bread of life) to clearly allude to His own sacrificial death on the cross, believing in Him and trusting Him (as is later revealed in His crucifixion, death and resurrection) shows that eternal life can only be brought about by ‘feeding’ on Christ’s death, as sin-bearer for believers, and believers *only*. (8)

“I am the light of the world” (John 8:12)

Once again, Jesus spoke to the people and said, “***I am the light of the world.*** Whoever follows Me will never walk in the darkness, but will have the light of life.” So the Pharisees said to Him, “You are testifying about Yourself; Your testimony is not valid.” Jesus replied, “Even if I testify about Myself, My testimony is valid, because I know where I came from and where I am going. But you do not know where I came from or where I am going. You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. But even if I do judge, My judgment is true, because I am not alone; I am with the Father who sent Me. Even in your own Law it is written that the testimony of two men is valid. I am One who testifies about Myself, and the Father, who sent Me, also testifies about Me.” “Where is Your Father?” they asked Him. “You do not know Me or My Father,” Jesus answered. “If you knew Me, you would know My Father as well.” He spoke these words while teaching in the temple courts, near the treasury. Yet no one seized Him, because His hour had not yet come.
John 8:12–20 (BSB)

Commentary:

In this segment Jesus is in the Jerusalem temple (v.20) speaking to a group of people, including the Pharisees, with whom Jesus has a challenging dialogue. This takes place during the ‘Festival of Tabernacles’ in which the Jews at Jesus’ time commemorated the fire pillar of God, which guided the Israelites in Moses’ days in the wilderness - lasting a week, four massive candelabras are kept burning - as Jesus is speaking, the light emanating from the fire is associated with life, while darkness stands for death. (9)

As Jesus makes His second major ‘I AM” claim (v.12) He declares Himself as the one who provides eternal salvation, which the Pharisees challenge, but Jesus counters by appealing to God the Father as His corroborating witness. (10) However, we know that God also testifies about Jesus at His baptism and transfiguration, as we hear God’s voice at these events. As Jesus drives home the point that the Pharisees know neither God, nor God’s Son (Jesus) (v.20) the hostility towards Jesus increasing. (11)

In the following verses (John 8:31-59) the tension rises to the point that the Pharisees engage in a dialogue with Jesus, culminating in an attempt to stone Him, from which Jesus “hid Himself and went out of the temple,” (v.59). What prompted such hostility? When Jesus refers to Himself as ‘I AM’ in John 8:58, saying: “Truly, truly I say to you, before Abraham was born, ***I AM***,” Jesus is referring to God’s personal name, the tetragrammaton, YHWH - relating to attributes belonging to God alone (as God reveals Himself to Moses in Exodus 3:14 at the burning bush): that is God’s self-existence, changelessness and eternality - which the Jews view as blasphemy, since Jesus is making a claim to deity. (12)

“I am the Gate of the Sheep” (John 10:7, 9)

“I am the Good Shepherd” (John 10:11, 14)

“Truly, truly, I tell you, whoever does not enter the sheepfold by the gate, but climbs in some other way, is a thief and a robber. But the one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen for his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will flee from him because they do not recognize his voice.” Jesus spoke to them using this illustration, but they did not understand what He was telling them. So He said to them again, “Truly, truly, I tell you, ***I am the gate for the sheep***. All who came before Me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. ***I am the gate.*** If anyone enters through Me, he will be saved. He will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come that they may have life, and have it in all its fullness. ***I am the good shepherd.*** The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd, and the sheep are not his own. When he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf pounces on them and scatters the flock. The man runs away because he is a hired servant and is unconcerned for the sheep. ***I am the good shepherd.*** I know My sheep and My sheep know Me, just as the Father knows Me and I know the Father. And I lay down My life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them in as well, and they will listen to My voice. Then there will be one flock and one shepherd. The reason the Father loves Me is that I lay down My life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of My own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from My Father.” Again there was division among the Jews because of Jesus’ message. Many of them said, “He is demon-possessed and insane. Why would you listen to Him?” But others replied, “These are not the words of a man possessed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?”

John 10:1–21 (BSB)

Commentary:

Having miraculously opened the eyes of a man born blind (John 9), Jesus is now preaching in the Jerusalem temple. In this passage we have two major ‘I AM’ statement of Jesus, as “gate of the sheep” (v.7, 9) and as “Good Shepherd” (v. 11, 14). The combination of the two statements provide insight into different aspects of who Jesus is and His ministry: The door image reveals that salvation is only available through Jesus (v.9), while the ‘good shepherd’ (Jesus) gives His own life to save His sheep (v.11). (13)

In the door image we have allusions to the Old Testament: First, when Jesus refers to Himself as “gate for the sheep,” this likely refers back to Psalm 118:20. Second, “all who came before me were thieves and robbers,” points to Ezekiel 34:2-4. Third, Jesus’ words in v.9, “will come in and go out” is reminiscent of the Mosaic covenant (Deuteronomy 28:6; Psalm 121:8) as Moses describes Joshua, who leads the Israelites into the promised land (Numbers 27:16-18). (14)

As the Good Shepherd, we have a message here of God’s promises to Jews and King David, who will shepherd the people of God (Psalm 23:1; Isaiah 40:11) - with Jesus fulfilling both prophecies as the Messiah and the Lord. (15) The “other sheep” that Jesus must bring into His fold (v.16) refers to Gentile believers (16), while a contrast can be seen between the ‘good shepherd’ (Jesus) and the ‘thieves and robbers’ (the Pharisees), who are nothing more than ‘hired hands.’ (17) Despite the fact, that as the confrontation continues (John 10:31, 39), his opponents unsuccessfully try to stone Him and seize Him, Jesus’ ‘Good Shepherd’ statement emphasizes mutual recognition: Jesus knows His own (sheep) and His sheep know Him (Jesus as Messiah). (18)

“I am the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25)

When Jesus arrived, He found that Lazarus had already spent four days in the tomb. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, a little less than two miles away, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them in the loss of their brother. So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went

out to meet Him; but Mary stayed at home. Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give You whatever You ask of Him.” “Your brother will rise again,” Jesus told her. Martha replied, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.” Jesus said to her, “***I am the resurrection and the life.*** Whoever believes in Me will live, even though he dies. And everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?” “Yes, Lord,” she answered, “I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world.”
John 11:17–27 (BSB)

Commentary:

This passage takes place at Bethany; where Jesus had been acquainted with Mary, Martha and Lazarus (Luke 10:38) and here Jesus arrives following the death and burial of Lazarus (v.17). As the event unfolds, Jesus has a conversation with Martha, who is one of the sisters of the deceased Lazarus (v.20-27), which has Jesus reveal His astounding ‘I AM’ statement: “I am the resurrection and the life.” “whoever believes in Me will live, even though he dies.” (v.25). Here, we see that Jesus immediately connects this saying with a sign (a miracle) before He raises Lazarus from the dead (John 11:38-45). (19)

Because Jesus is “the resurrection and the life,” everyone who believes in Him will be victorious over death by being resurrected, and are also already eternally secure in their salvation, through Jesus Christ, before they die, since He says: “And everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die,” in v.26. (20)

Following the raising of Lazarus from the dead - despite hearing about this miracle, the chief priest and Pharisees plot to kill Jesus (John 11:46-57) as well as Lazarus (John 12:10-11), yet this astonishing miracle, assures all believers that the resurrection and eternal life are available *only* through Jesus. (21)

“I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6)

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe in Me as well. In My Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and welcome you into My presence, so that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.” “Lord,” said Thomas, “we do not know where You are going, so how can we know the way?” Jesus answered, “***I am the way and the truth and the life.*** No one comes to the Father except through Me. If you had known Me, you would know My Father as well. From now on you do know Him and have seen Him.” Philip said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us.” Jesus replied, “Philip, I have been with you all this time, and still you do not know Me? Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? The words I say to you, I do not speak on My own. Instead, it is the Father dwelling in Me, performing His works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me—or at least believe on account of the works themselves. Truly, truly, I tell you, whoever believes in Me will also do the works that I am doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in My name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me for anything in My name, I will do it.”
John 14:1–14 (BSB)

Commentary:

In this passage Jesus is in Jerusalem in an upper room at an undisclosed location, celebrating the Passover and joining His disciples at the Last Supper, literally a few hours before His arrest, crucifixion, death - preceding His resurrection and ascension. Jesus is cleaning up misunderstandings about Himself, and God the Father, as Christ is responding to the disciple Thomas with His ‘I AM’ statement (v.6). The last part following this statement in the same verse, “No one comes to the Father except through Me,” emphasizes that Jesus Christ is the *only* pathway to God. (22)

Moreover, Jesus reveals His unique relationship with God (v.10) and then promises that all who will ever believe in Christ will “do even greater things than these” (v.12) in accordance with God’s perfect plan, purpose and timing - revealing His will to Christians, and helping us accomplish all He sets out for us to do - for *His* glory (v.13-14). What matters most here is that, as supreme revelation of God, Jesus *is* the way to God, the truth of God and the life of God, since Christ has ‘life in himself’ (John 5:26). (23)

“I am the true vine” (John 15:1, 5)

“***I am the true vine***, and My Father is the keeper of the vineyard. He cuts off every branch in Me that bears no fruit, and every branch that does bear fruit, He prunes to make it even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in Me, and I will remain in you. Just as no branch can bear fruit by itself unless it remains in the vine, neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in Me. ***I am the vine*** and you are the branches. The one who remains in Me, and I in him, will bear much fruit. For apart from Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in Me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers. Such branches are gathered up, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you remain in Me and My words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to My Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, proving yourselves to be My disciples.”
John 15:1–8 (BSB)

Commentary:

Like the previous “I AM” statements, this last such statement of our Lord, takes place at Jerusalem during the Last Supper. Vine imagery is common in the ancient world, and in particular, a well-known symbol for Israel in the Old Testament (Psalms 80:9-16; Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeramiah 2:21; Ezekiel 15:1-8). (24) These Old Testament allusions help us understand Jesus’ statement in v.1, showing that He is the true Israel. (25)

What matters here is that the symbolic language Jesus uses hides the truth from unbelievers, that is those without faith, so Jesus is helping His disciples clear up any confusion and misunderstanding. (26) As such, when Jesus says that God-the Father “cuts off” branches that do not produce fruit (v.2), He is referring to unbelievers, in other words, this means that all true Christians, produce some kind of fruit. (27)

As Jesus continues explaining the meaning of His statement further, we understand that ‘pruning’ (v.2) though it is part of our relationship with God as believers, is painful at times (Hebrews 12:4-11). (28) What all this teaches us is that, although Jesus both has a divine and human nature, He is the uniquely pre-existent Son of God, who came as ‘God in the Flesh,’ thereby as a real human being to die sacrificially on the cross for the salvation of other human beings (that is all Christians). (29)

And this is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you: God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with Him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make Him out to be a liar, and His word is not in us.
1 John 1:5–10 (BSB)

Conclusion:

To sum up, we now have a better understanding of Jesus’ ‘I AM’ sayings, since as seen, they point directly to Himself as the divine fulfillment as Messiah. In this series of statements Jesus demands a Christological belief, which means He insists that He is the only way to heaven. (30) By connecting His miracles (‘signs’) to His I am statements, such as in the “bread of life” claim (John 6:35) following His feeding of the 5,000 or calling Himself the “light of the world” (John 9:5) following His healing of a man born blind (John 9:6-7), Jesus leaves no doubt that He is indeed God’s Son. (31)

This gives us an awareness into the contrast between light and dark, that is belief and unbelief, as exemplified by Jesus’ ‘false’ disciples and especially the Jewish leadership - the Pharisees. Those who do not believe, are unable to see beyond the “bread of life” as it points to the heavenly origin of Jesus, and not to Moses. (32) The Pharisees remain in darkness as they challenge Jesus by asking “Where is your father?” (John 3:19), and insist on their own freedom, since they boast about being Abrahams’s descendants (John 8:33) culminating in Jesus’ “I AM” statements about Abraham in John 8:58. (33) It is here that we see Jesus’ exclusivity as He explains that it is *only* through Him - not being a Jew, or Abraham’s descendant - that provides membership as God’s people. (34)

Furthermore, as Jesus refers to Himself as “Gate of the Sheep” and “Good Shepherd” (John 10:7, 9 and John 10: 11, 14) we see Old Testament prophecies (Ezekiel 34) fulfilled in Jesus, which causes division among His hearers, yet Jesus is the messianic shepherd who saves His people from those who are false shepherds (Pharisees). (35)

Lastly, we see in Jesus’ ‘I AM’ statements in John 11:25; 14:6 and 15:5 - harking back to the opening Bible passage to this conclusion (1 John 1:5-10) - we as believers are admonished to be aware of ‘false’ believers, that is those who claim to be Christians, but in truth, are not.

Nevertheless, for all true believers, we stand in awe of God’s grace towards us, as He has revealed Himself to us in Jesus Christ and His ‘I AM’ statements, especially as He says “I am the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25). Thus, even in this present age, through Christ, Christians have conquered death in that even physical death does not remove the ‘eternal life’ we already enjoy. (36) Note here, how Jesus already demonstrates His divine power, merely by using His Word (John 18:6) and especially as He ‘calls’ Lazarus back to life (John 11:43). Also, Jesus’ ‘I AM’ comes into play in Revelation. Here Jesus says, “I am the One who searches minds and hearts, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds,” (Revelation 2:23) and also “I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the bright morning star,” (Revelation 22:16) - the “I AM” used here not in an absolute sense, but as a basic predicate construction. (37)

It is in all of this, that we see, learn about and experience God’s promised grace. Jesus gives us His Word, He is the Word, and we can trust His Word. Jesus knows all who are His true followers (John 10:3) and they know Him. Jesus knows us better than we do ourselves, He knows our story, personality, pain and unique needs, and as such Jesus reveals Himself to each one of us in a very personal way. (38) May we - just as Peter - positively and unequivocally affirm Jesus Christ as our personal Lord and Savior:

> Then Jesus and His disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way, He questioned His disciples: “Who do people say I am?” They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.” “But what about you?” Jesus asked. “Who do you say I am?” Peter answered, “You are the Christ.”
>
> Mark 8:27–29 (BSB)

APPENDIX A
(All seven “I AM” sayings with verse numbers)

“I am the bread of Life” (John 6:35, 41, 48, 51)

John 6:22–59 (BSB)

22 The next day, the crowd that had remained on the other side of the sea realized
that only one boat had been there, and that Jesus had not boarded it with His
disciples, but they had gone away alone. 23 However, some boats from Tiberias
landed near the place where the people had eaten the bread after the Lord had
given thanks. 24 So when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor His disciples were
there, they got into the boats and went to Capernaum to look for Him. 25 When they
found Him on the other side of the sea, they asked Him, “Rabbi, when did You get
here?” 26 Jesus replied, “Truly, truly, I tell you, it is not because you saw these signs
that you are looking for Me, but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. 27 Do
not work for food that perishes, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the
Son of Man will give you. For on Him God the Father has placed His seal of
approval.” 28 Then they inquired, “What must we do to perform the works of God?”
29 Jesus replied, “The work of God is this: to believe in the One He has sent.” 30 So
they asked Him, “What sign then will You perform, so that we may see it and believe
You? What will You do? 31 Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, as it is
written: ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’” 32 Jesus said to them, “Truly,
truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is My
Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. 33 For the bread of God is He who
comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” 34 “Sir,” they said, “give us
this bread at all times.” 35 Jesus answered, ***“I am the bread of life.*** Whoever
comes to Me will never hunger, and whoever believes in Me will never thirst. 36 But
as I stated, you have seen Me and still you do not believe. 37 Everyone the Father
gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will never drive away. 38
For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but to do the will of Him
who sent Me. 39 And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that I shall lose none of
those He has given Me, but raise them up at the last day. 40 For it is My Father’s will
that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in Him shall have eternal life, and I
will raise him up at the last day.” 41 At this, the Jews began to grumble about Jesus
because He had said, ***“I am the bread that came down from heaven.”*** 42 They
were asking, “Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we
know? How then can He say, ‘I have come down from heaven?’ ” 43 “Stop grumbling
among yourselves,” Jesus replied. 44 “No one can come to Me unless the Father who
sent Me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day. 45 It is written in the
Prophets: ‘And they will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who has heard the Father
and learned from Him comes to Me— 46 not that anyone has seen the Father except
the One who is from God; only He has seen the Father. 47 Truly, truly, I tell you, he
who believes has eternal life. 48 ***I am the bread of life.*** 49 Your fathers ate the
manna in the wilderness, yet they died. 50 This is the bread that comes down from
heaven, so that anyone may eat of it and not die. 51 ***I am the living bread that
came down from heaven.*** If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And
this bread, which I will give for the life of the world, is My flesh.” 52 At this, the Jews
began to argue among themselves, “How can this man give us His flesh to eat?” 53
So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh and drink the
blood of the Son of Man, you have no life in you. 54 Whoever eats My flesh and
drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 For My flesh
is real food, and My blood is real drink. 56 Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My

blood remains in Me, and I in him. [57] Just as the living Father sent Me and I live because of the Father, so also the one who feeds on Me will live because of Me. [58] This is the bread that came down from heaven. Unlike your fathers, who ate the manna and died, the one who eats this bread will live forever." [59] Jesus said this while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum.

"I am the Light of the World" (John 8:12)

John 8:12–20 (BSB)
[12] Once again, Jesus spoke to the people and said, ***"I am the light of the world.*** Whoever follows Me will never walk in the darkness, but will have the light of life." [13] So the Pharisees said to Him, "You are testifying about Yourself; Your testimony is not valid." [14] Jesus replied, "Even if I testify about Myself, My testimony is valid, because I know where I came from and where I am going. But you do not know where I came from or where I am going. [15] You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. [16] But even if I do judge, My judgment is true, because I am not alone; I am with the Father who sent Me. [17] Even in your own Law it is written that the testimony of two men is valid. [18] I am One who testifies about Myself, and the Father, who sent Me, also testifies about Me." [19] "Where is Your Father?" they asked Him. "You do not know Me or My Father," Jesus answered. "If you knew Me, you would know My Father as well." [20] He spoke these words while teaching in the temple courts, near the treasury. Yet no one seized Him, because His hour had not yet come.

"I am the Gate of the Sheep" (John 10:7, 9)

"I am the Good Shepherd" (John 10:11, 14)

John 10:1–21 (BSB)
[1] "Truly, truly, I tell you, whoever does not enter the sheepfold by the gate, but climbs in some other way, is a thief and a robber. [2] But the one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. [3] The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen for his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. [4] When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. [5] But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will flee from him because they do not recognize his voice." [6] Jesus spoke to them using this illustration, but they did not understand what He was telling them. [7] So He said to them again, "Truly, truly, I tell you, ***I am the gate for the sheep.*** [8] All who came before Me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. [9] ***I am the gate.*** If anyone enters through Me, he will be saved. He will come in and go out and find pasture. [10] The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come that they may have life, and have it in all its fullness. [11]

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. [12] The hired hand is not the shepherd, and the sheep are not his own. When he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf pounces on them and scatters the flock. [13] The man runs away because he is a hired servant and is unconcerned for the sheep. [14] ***I am the good shepherd.*** I know My sheep and My sheep know Me, [15] just as the Father knows Me and I know the Father. And I lay down My life for the sheep. [16] I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them in as well, and they will listen to My voice. Then there will be one flock and one shepherd. [17] The reason the Father loves Me is that I lay down My life in order to take it up again. [18] No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of My own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from My Father." [19] Again there was division among the Jews because of Jesus' message. [20] Many of them said, "He is demon-possessed and insane. Why would you listen to Him?" [21] But others replied, "These are not the words of a man possessed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?"

"I am the Resurrection and the Life" (John 11:25)

John 11:17–27 (BSB)
[17] When Jesus arrived, He found that Lazarus had already spent four days in the tomb. [18] Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, a little less than two miles away, [19] and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them in the loss of their brother. [20] So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet Him; but Mary stayed at home. [21] Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. [22] But even now I know that God will give You whatever You ask of Him." [23] "Your brother will rise again," Jesus told her. [24] Martha replied, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." [25] Jesus said to her, "***I am the resurrection and the life.*** Whoever believes in Me will live, even though he dies. [26] And everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?" [27] "Yes, Lord," she answered, "I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world."

"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life" (John 14:6)

John 14:1–14 (BSB)
[1] "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe in Me as well. [2] In My Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? [3] And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and welcome you into My presence, so that you also may be where I am. [4] You know the way to the place where I

am going.” [5] “Lord,” said Thomas, “we do not know where You are going, so how can we know the way?” [6] Jesus answered, “***I am the way and the truth and the life***. No one comes to the Father except through Me. [7] If you had known Me, you would know My Father as well. From now on you do know Him and have seen Him.” [8] Philip said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us.” [9] Jesus replied, “Philip, I have been with you all this time, and still you do not know Me? Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? [10] Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? The words I say to you, I do not speak on My own. Instead, it is the Father dwelling in Me, performing His works. [11] Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me—or at least believe on account of the works themselves. [12] Truly, truly, I tell you, whoever believes in Me will also do the works that I am doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. [13] And I will do whatever you ask in My name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. [14] If you ask Me for anything in My name, I will do it.

“I am the true Vine” (John 15:1, 5)

John 15:1–8 (BSB)
[1] “***I am the true vine***, and My Father is the keeper of the vineyard. [2] He cuts off every branch in Me that bears no fruit, and every branch that does bear fruit, He prunes to make it even more fruitful. [3] You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. [4] Remain in Me, and I will remain in you. Just as no branch can bear fruit by itself unless it remains in the vine, neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in Me. [5] ***I am the vine*** and you are the branches. The one who remains in Me, and I in him, will bear much fruit. For apart from Me you can do nothing. [6] If anyone does not remain in Me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers. Such branches are gathered up, thrown into the fire, and burned. [7] If you remain in Me and My words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. [8] This is to My Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, proving yourselves to be My disciples.

1 John 1:5–10 (BSB)
[5] And this is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you: God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. [6] If we say we have fellowship with Him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. [7] But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. [8] If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. [9] If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. [10] If we say we have not sinned, we make Him out to be a liar, and His word is not in us.

Notes

(1) *Nelson's Complete Book Of Bible Maps And Charts*, 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010., p.334.
(2)) Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020., p.364.
(3)) Fee, Gordon D. and Douglas K. Stuart, *How to Read the Bible Book by Book: A Guided Tour*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014., p.307.
(4) Pate, C. Marvin. *The Writings of John: A Survey of the Gospel, Epistles, and Apocalypse*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011., p.95.
(5) Pate, C. Marvin. *The Writings of John: A Survey of the Gospel, Epistles, and Apocalypse*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011., p.93.
(6) Pate, C. Marvin. *The Writings of John: A Survey of the Gospel, Epistles, and Apocalypse*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011., p.93-94.
(7) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.305.
(8) Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008., p.250.
(9) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.306-307.
(10) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009., p.346.
(11) Carson, D. A. *The Gospel According to John. Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991., p.341.
(12) Miller, Jeffrey E. 2016. “I Am Sayings.” In *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, edited by John D. Barry, David Bomar, Derek R. Brown, Rachel Klippenstein, Douglas Mangum, Carrie Sinclair Wolcott, Lazarus Wentz, Elliot Ritzema, and Wendy Widder. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press. Logos Bible Software.

(13) Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008., p.250.
(14) Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007., p.461-464.
(15) Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008., p.251.
(16) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.309.
(17) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.308.
(18) Carson, D. A. *The Gospel According to John. Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991., p.387.
(19) Miller, Jeffrey E. 2016. "I Am Sayings." In *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, edited by John D. Barry, David Bomar, Derek R. Brown, Rachel Klippenstein, Douglas Mangum, Carrie Sinclair Wolcott, Lazarus Wentz, Elliot Ritzema, and Wendy Widder. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.
(20) Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008., p.251.
(21) Carson, D. A. *The Gospel According to John. Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991., p.412.
(22) Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008., p.252.
(23) Carson, D. A. *The Gospel According to John. Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991., p.491.
(24) Carson, D. A. *The Gospel According to John. Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991., p.513.
(25) Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008., p.252.
(26)) Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020., p.364.
(27) Carson, D. A. *The Gospel According to John. Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991., p.515.
(28) Carson, D. A. *The Gospel According to John. Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991., p.514.
(29) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.291.
(30) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.291.
(31) Miller, Jeffrey E. 2016. "I Am Sayings." In *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, edited by John D. Barry, David Bomar, Derek R. Brown, Rachel Klippenstein, Douglas Mangum, Carrie Sinclair Wolcott, Lazarus Wentz, Elliot Ritzema, and Wendy Widder. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press. Logos Bible Software.
(32) Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007., p.447.
(33) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.307.

(34) Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008., p.252.
(35) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009., p.349.
(36) Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008., p.251.
(37) Miller, Jeffrey E. 2016. “I Am Sayings.” In *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, edited by John D. Barry, David Bomar, Derek R. Brown, Rachel Klippenstein, Douglas Mangum, Carrie Sinclair Wolcott, Lazarus Wentz, Elliot Ritzema, and Wendy Widder. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press. Logos Bible Software.
(38) Buzzard, Justin. *John: A 12-Week Study*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2014., p.47.

Bibliography

Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007.

Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009.

Buzzard, Justin. *John: A 12-Week Study*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2014.

Carson, D. A. *The Gospel According to John. Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991.

Fee, Gordon D. and Douglas K. Stuart, *How to Read the Bible Book by Book: A Guided Tour*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014.

Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012.

Miller, Jeffrey E. 2016. “I Am Sayings.” In *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, edited by John D. Barry, David Bomar, Derek R. Brown, Rachel Klippenstein, Douglas Mangum, Carrie Sinclair Wolcott, Lazarus Wentz, Elliot Ritzema, and Wendy Widder. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press. Logos Bible Software.

Nelson's Complete Book Of Bible Maps And Charts, 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010.

Pate, C. Marvin. *The Writings of John: A Survey of the Gospel, Epistles, and Apocalypse*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011.

Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008.

Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020.

Nicodemus and Jesus Christ

"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that everyone who believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him. Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe has already been condemned, because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son."
John 3:16–18 (BSB)

Introduction:

Among all Bible verses, John 3:16 is likely the most well-known. (1) However, as we see in the opening passage above, the immediate context matters, since we understand from the following two verses, that eternal salvation and eternal condemnation, are a result of either believing in Jesus Christ, or not. There is no middle ground.

In the segment we are exploring here (John 3:1-21) we have the record of an encounter between Jesus Christ and Nicodemus (Gr. Nicodēmos, meaning 'conqueror over the people'), who is a leading Pharisee ("a leader of the Jews") as well as a member of the Sanhedrin (the Jewish high court at the time). (2) Considering the mentioning of the Jewish Passover feast and Jesus' temple clearing (John 2:13, 23) we get the impression that Nicodemus is visiting Jesus following these events, somewhere in or near Jerusalem at night time. (3)

It is this exchange between Jesus and Nicodemus that we are looking at here - where we learn about Nicodemus' real need, namely a transformation of heart through the Holy Spirit to make it possible for Him to see God's kingdom in all its fulness. (4) There are two parts: First, we are considering the dialogue between Jesus and Nicodemus (John 3:1-12) and second, we are considering how Jesus expands upon His teaching in what appears to be similar to a monologue (John 3:13-21).

Dialogue with Nicodemus (John 3:1-12)

Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs You are doing if God were not with him." Jesus replied, ***"Truly, truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."*** "How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Can he enter his mother's womb a second time to be born?" Jesus answered, ***"Truly, truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh is born of flesh, but spirit is born of the Spirit. Do not be amazed that I said, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes. You hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."*** "How can this be?" Nicodemus asked. **"You are Israel's teacher,"** said Jesus, ***"and you do not understand these things? Truly, truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, and yet you people do not accept our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you about heavenly things?"***
John 3:1–12 (BSB)

Commentary:

As mentioned, Nicodemus, a Pharisee, visits Jesus at night (v.1-2). It is uncertain why Nicodemus comes to Jesus at night, yet addressing him as

“Rabbi” shows his respect towards Jesus. (5) However, Jesus is not flattered by these words, since He knows the heart of Nicodemus and sees that he does not have true faith (yet), as Jesus proclaims, “Truly, truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again” (v.3). (6) In other words, Jesus is talking about a necessary ‘new birth’ which precedes salvation (“to see the kingdom of God” in v.3). (7)

Nicodemus’ question in v.4 demonstrates spiritual blindness (8) - as he is a representative of Jerusalem’s religious leaders, many of which openly opposed Jesus - and shows that Nicodemus had no idea at all what Jesus is talking about. (9) Note that Jesus’ words “truly, truly” used several times in this exchange (v.3, 5, 11) (a form of agreement, like ‘Amen, amen’) confirm the importance and trustworthiness of what He is about to say.

When Jesus talks about being “born of water and the Spirit” as prerequisite to “enter the kingdom of God” (v.5) the “water” and “Spirit” create a single conceptual unit indicating a rebirth as a result of the Holy Spirit cleansing and reviving a regenerate person. (11) There is a precedent here from the Old Testament, where water as cleanser is connected to the coming of the Spirit at the end times (12):

> I will also sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. I will cleanse you from all your impurities and all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes and to carefully observe My ordinances.
>
> Ezekiel 36:25–27 (BSB)

Other Old Testament antecedents can be found in Isaiah 44:3, as well as Isaiah 12:3; 32:2; 35:7; 41:17-18; 43:20; 49:10 and 55:1, so it is Jesus who baptizes with the Holy Spirit. (13) As such, the “water” in v.5 does not refer to physical water, or baptism, but as a conceptual unity points directly to Christ. (14)

Jesus then clarifies this rebirth further (v.6-8) by contrasting “flesh” and “Spirit” - the natural birth (flesh) is very different than the spiritual birth (Spirit), and only the latter enables entrance into God’s kingdom. (15) The connection between the Holy Spirit and the wind, shows that it is God’s sovereign will, who will be regenerated and who will not. There is no man-made mechanism, ritual, or specific ‘good deed’ a person can do, in order to be saved.

In v.9 we hear Nicodemus speaking for the last time, as he is inquiring "how can this be?" When Jesus retorts ("You are Israel's teacher," v.10), He is implying that Nicodemus should have understood what Jesus is talking about. (16) While Jesus generally refers to Himself as 'I," in v.11, His use of "we" may refer to Himself and the witness of the Holy Spirit, since the Holy Spirit is part of what Jesus is trying to teach Nicodemus.(17) In v.12 then, Jesus' question does not only challenge Nicodemus and his earthly authority, but also prepares to get him ready for the teaching of spiritual realities Jesus wants to convey.

Jesus Expands His Teaching (John 3:13-21)

"No one has ascended into heaven except the One who descended from heaven—the Son of Man. Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in Him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that everyone who believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him. Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe has already been condemned, because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. And this is the verdict: The Light has come into the world, but men loved the darkness rather than the Light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come into the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever practices the truth comes into the Light, so that it may be seen clearly that what he has done has been accomplished in God."
John 3:13–21 (BSB)

Commentary:

In this second part of His encounter with Nicodemus, Jesus expands on His earlier teaching. In v.13 Jesus reveals His unique qualification to reveal divine truth, since He Himself is the "Son of Man." (18) In v.14 Jesus is bringing the Old Testament back to Nicodemus' mind, as He points to the new life the Israelites received as they looked at Moses' bronze serpent (Numbers 21:5-9) - Jesus then links this event directly to Himself (v.15) relating that believers in Christ have and continue to enjoy eternal life both now and in the age to come. (19)

As Jesus continues his discourse to Nicodemus, v.16 is among the most quoted promises in Scripture. (20) Here, the verb 'to love' (*agapaō*) and the noun 'love' (*agapē*) - are most frequently used in John 13-17 (21) - with v.16-

21 revealing the universal implications of the foregoing conversation: God-the Father sends and gives His own son, pointing to both the incarnation and crucifixion of Christ. (22) The next verse (v.17) is a restatement of v.16, that is God's purpose for Christ is to make possible salvation through Him. (23)

The issue of belief and unbelief is addressed by Jesus in v. 18, revealing that those who do not believe in Christ are self-condemned. This leads directly to the verdict Jesus announces in v.19, where unbelievers remain condemned prior to and at the Last Judgment, whereas believers have eternal life both now and for all eternity. (24)

The contrast between unbelievers ('those who do evil and hate the light' - the light is Jesus - in v.20) and believers ('those who practice the truth and come into the light' in v.21) i.e. those who act in conformity with the truth (25) concludes the discussion with Nicodemus.

As such, v.13-21 provides Jesus' testimony concerning His mission, that is descending to earth as God-incarnate, revealing Himself as the Messiah, being crucified to atone for sin, and to be resurrected. (26) Thus, v.17 points right to Jesus' mission, v.19 provides the verdict (Gk. *krisis*) revealing how some people value pride above integrity - to the point of hating the light and refusing to go near it - and v.21 reveals those who believe in Jesus and are in union with Him ('coming into the light'). (27) The verses to follow (John 3:22-36) which is a dialogue between John the Baptist and his disciples, reinforces the themes found in Jesus' dialogue with Nicodemus. (28)

Conclusion:

In summary, we see the astonishing truths Jesus reveals as He is talking with Nicodemus. For one, we see that Jesus is omniscient in that He sees the true state of every person's heart. (29) That is why Jesus cuts right to the chase, *even before* Nicodemus asks any question (v.3). At the same time, we see our Lord's patience as He clears up misunderstanding, here about being 'born again.' (30) Thereby, the reference to being "born of the water and the Spirit" (v.5) is a reference to the Old Testament (Ezekiel 36:25-27) clearly with the predicted spiritual cleansing, characteristic of Messianic times. (31)

Also, we see how the Holy Spirit is inseparably connected with Jesus' person and His ministry (v. 6-8), since ultimately the life-giving Spirit provides eternal life, based solely on the death and resurrection of Christ. (32)

What matters most is that - based on Jesus' clear teaching - those who believe in Him will have eternal life, while those who reject God's Son are self-condemned to eternal darkness, separated from God in hell. (33) It is God in His sovereignty who draws people to Himself, as Jesus illustrates in v.8 and it is Christ's firsthand testimony we are to follow.(34)

Thus, it is God's initiative to help anyone who believes in Jesus Christ - to begin a relationship with God (1 John 4:19). (35) Salvation is accomplished solely through God's grace (Ephesians 2:5; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Titus 2:11) - and the prerequisites for us are repentance, faith and obedience. (36)

As in the case of Nicodemus, we see this faith in Christ growing: moving from darkness to light (John 3:1-21), publicly displaying his faith at the Sanhedrin (John 7:50-52) and risking his own life and reputation following Jesus' death (John 19:39-42). (37) This last action of Nicodemus, as recorded in the Bible, tells us how he joins Joseph of Arimathea, assisting him in the burial of Jesus' body (38) and providing expensive perfumes (John 19:39) - so, the final remedy against spiritual darkness, is believing in Jesus Christ, who is the light that has come into the world. (39)

Appendix
(John 3:1-21)

John 3:1–21 (BSB)
1 Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. 2 He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs You are

doing if God were not with him.” 3 Jesus replied, “Truly, truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.” 4 “How can a man be born when he is old?” Nicodemus asked. “Can he enter his mother’s womb a second time to be born?” 5 Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. 6 Flesh is born of flesh, but spirit is born of the Spirit. 7 Do not be amazed that I said, ‘You must be born again.’ 8 The wind blows where it wishes. You hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.”
9 “How can this be?” Nicodemus asked. 10 “You are Israel’s teacher,” said Jesus, “and you do not understand these things? 11 Truly, truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, and yet you people do not accept our testimony. 12 If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? 13 No one has ascended into heaven except the One who descended from heaven—the Son of Man. 14 Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, 15 that everyone who believes in Him may have eternal life. 16 For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that everyone who believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.
17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him. 18 Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe has already been condemned, because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son. 19 And this is the verdict: The Light has come into the world, but men loved the darkness rather than the Light because their deeds were evil. 20 Everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come into the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. 21 But whoever practices the truth comes into the Light, so that it may be seen clearly that what he has done has been accomplished in God.”

Notes

(1) Buzzard, Justin. *John: A 12-Week Study*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2014., p.29.
(2) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011., p.1021.
(3) Nelson, Thomas. *NIV Chronological Study Bible*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2014., p.1107.
(4) Nelson, Thomas. *NIV Chronological Study Bible*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2014., p.1108.
(5) Carson, D. A. *The Gospel According to John. Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991., p.186.
(6) Pate, C. Marvin. *The Writings of John: A Survey of the Gospel, Epistles, and Apocalypse*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011., p.72.
(7) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011., p.1021.
(8) Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020., p.371.
(9) Carson, D. A. *The Gospel According to John. Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991., p.190.
(10) Carson, D. A. *The Gospel According to John. Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991., p.162.
(11) Harris, Murray J. *John (Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament)*. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2015., p.73.
(12) Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020., p.371-372.
(13) Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008., p.462.
(14) Carson, D. A. *The Gospel According to John. Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991., p.191-194.
(15) Pate, C. Marvin. *The Writings of John: A Survey of the Gospel, Epistles, and Apocalypse*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011., p.73.
(16) Carson, D. A. *The Gospel According to John. Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991., p.198.
(17) Grudem, Wayne A. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand
Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000., p.555.
(18) Harris, Murray J. *John (Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament)*. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2015., p.75.
(19) Harris, Murray J. *John (Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament)*. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2015., p.75.
(20) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009., p.264.
(21) Carson, D. A. *The Gospel According to John. Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991., p.204.
(22) Harris, Murray J. *John (Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament)*. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2015., p.78.

(23) Harris, Murray J. *John (Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament)*. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2015., p.79.
(24) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.301.
(25) Harris, Murray J. *John (Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament)*. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2015., p.80.
(26) Pate, C. Marvin. *The Writings of John: A Survey of the Gospel, Epistles, and Apocalypse*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011., p.74.
(27) Carson, D. A. *The Gospel According to John. Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991., p.206-208
(28) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009., p.265.
(29) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.300.
(30) Pate, C. Marvin. *The Writings of John: A Survey of the Gospel, Epistles, and Apocalypse*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011., p.73.
(31) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009., p.264.
(32) Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008., p.462-465.
(33) Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020., p.372.
(34) Harris, Murray J. *John (Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament)*. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2015., p.73-74.
(35) Buzzard, Justin. *John: A 12-Week Study*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2014., p.32.
(36)) Alexander, T. Desmond and Brian S. Rosner, eds. *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. Leicester: IVP Academic, 2000.,p.765.
(37) Pate, C. Marvin. *The Writings of John: A Survey of the Gospel, Epistles, and Apocalypse*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011., p.74.
(38) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011., p.1021.
(39) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.496.

Alexander, T. Desmond and Brian S. Rosner, eds. *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. Leicester: IVP Academic, 2000.

Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009.

Buzzard, Justin. *John: A 12-Week Study*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2014.

Carson, D. A. *The Gospel According to John. Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991.

Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011.

Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995.

Grudem, Wayne A. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand
Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000.

Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012.

Harris, Murray J. *John (Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament)*. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2015.

Nelson, Thomas. *NIV Chronological Study Bible*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2014.

Pate, C. Marvin. *The Writings of John: A Survey of the Gospel, Epistles, and Apocalypse*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011.

Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008.

Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020.

Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again. But whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a fount of water springing up to eternal life.”
John 4:13–14 (BSB)

Introduction:

Only the gospel of John records Jesus Christ meeting a Samaritan woman (1), as He is travelling from Judea to Galilee and passing through Samaria (‘Jesus and the Samaritan,’ a.k.a. ‘The Woman at the Well’). It is here outside the Samaritan town of Sychar, at Jacob’s well, where this meeting takes place. This is a longer intimate dialogue, and the narrative provides some relevant principles of how to do evangelism. (2) While Jesus could have chosen a different route (circumventing Samaria) to reach His destination, He intentionally uses this route, since He has a missional agenda to complete. (3)

As Jesus encounters the Samaritan woman, we should take note of the history behind the setting: at Jacob’s well, near Mount Gerizim (the Old Testament location of Deuteronomic blessings in Deuteronomy 11:29; 27:12) and the proximity to Mount Ebal (the Old Testament location where Moses had commanded an alter to be built (Deuteronomy 27:4-6). (4) While there is a dispute about the background of the Samaritans, there is no dispute of the hostility between them and the Jews. Jewish history traces the Samaritan lineage back to the Fall of the Northern Kingdom (722 BC), allegedly resulting in Jewish and Gentile intermarriage (2 Kings 17:24-41). Ethnic origin and religious differences put a strain on the relationship between Samaritans and Jews, who considered the Samaritans to be idolators: As a result, open hostility between the two was common. (5)

It is in this context, Jesus is unafraid to overcome social behaviours as part of His mission (6) and as we consider the opening passage above - dealing with repentance and salvation - we realize that it is necessary for Jesus to go through Samaria to offer salvation to the people there, as part of God’s divine mission, despite the hatred and the animosity between Jews and Samaritans. (6) This is the focus of the Bible passage under scrutiny here (John 4:1-43), which is broken up into three parts: One, Jesus and the Samaritan Woman (v.1-30) - Two, Jesus and His disciples (v.31-38) - Three, Jesus and the Samaritans (v.39-43).

Jesus and The Samaritan Woman

When Jesus realized that the Pharisees were aware He was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John (although it was not Jesus who baptized, but His disciples), He left Judea and returned to Galilee. Now He had to pass through Samaria. So He came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Since Jacob's well was there, Jesus, weary from His journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour. When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, ***"Give Me a drink."*** (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) "You are a Jew," said the woman. "How can You ask for a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) Jesus answered, ***"If you knew the gift of God and who is asking you for a drink, you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."*** "Sir," the woman replied, "You have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where then will You get this living water? Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us this well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock?" Jesus said to her, ***"Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again. But whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a fount of water springing up to eternal life."*** The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water so that I will not get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water." Jesus told her, ***"Go, call your husband and come back."*** "I have no husband," the woman replied. Jesus said to her, ***"You are correct to say that you have no husband. In fact, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. You have spoken truthfully."*** "Sir," the woman said, "I see that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews say that the place where one must worship is in Jerusalem." ***"Believe Me, woman,"*** Jesus replied, ***"a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. But a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father is seeking such as these to worship Him. God is Spirit, and His worshipers must worship Him in spirit and in truth."*** The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When He comes, He will explain everything to us." Jesus answered, ***"I who speak to you am He."*** Just then His disciples returned and were surprised that He was speaking with a woman. But no one asked Him, "What do You want from her?" or "Why are You talking with her?" Then the woman left her water jar, went back into the town, and said to the people, "Come, see a man who told me everything

I ever did. Could this be the Christ?” So they left the town and made their way toward Jesus.
John 4:1–30 (BSB)

Commentary:

In v.1-3 we learn that Jesus is aware of the Pharisees investigating His activity, and so, due to His concern about a polarization of His ministry with that of John the Baptist - that is a concern about an apparent competition between Himself and John (7) - He decides to continue His ministry in Galilee. (8) When we read that “He *had* to pass through Samaria” (v.4) this indicates a God-ordained divine appointment (9), since Jesus could have reached Galilee without going through Samaria. As it is, the route Jesus and His disciples take, passing through Samaria is a three day-walk. (10)

The unnamed woman Jesus is about to meet (v.5-7) is from Sychar, a small village located near Shechem, with Jacob’s well about half a mile from the village - usually women would come as a group to draw water daily at a certain time, either earlier in the day, or later, to avoid the midday heat, yet - in an unusual way - this woman comes alone, at an awkward time (‘the sixth hour’ in v.6) which is about noon. (11) The geographical site, is an actual historical place (“the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph” in v.5) recorded in the Old Testament (Genesis 48:21-22; Genesis 33:18-19; Exodus 13:19; Joshua 24:32). (12)

It is at this point, while His disciples have gone into the town to buy food (v.8) that Jesus, waiting at the side of Jacob’s well, thirsty from His journey, initiates one of the longest conversations He has with any individual in the Gospels. What is startling here is that a Jewish man, let alone a Rabbi usually could not speak with a Samaritan woman (13), since Samaritan women, were viewed to be in a perpetual state of ritual uncleanness. (14)

As Jesus asks the woman for a drink (v.7) the initial hesitancy of the woman (v.9) is understandable, since Jesus breaking social and religious taboos, does not try to avoid becoming ceremonially unclean from a Jewish perspective, but (as ‘God in the Flesh’) actually *sanctifies* whatever He touches. How did the woman know that Jesus is Jewish? Most likely His speech and his clothing, different than that of Samaritans, enabled the woman to recognize Jesus as a Jew. (16)

As the conversation continues (v.10) the “gift of God” Jesus talks about, most likely refers to eternal life, which only Jesus provides (17): when His mentioning of “living water” has an Old Testament background:

> “For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living water, and they have dug their own cisterns— broken cisterns that cannot hold water.
>
> Jeremiah 2:13 (BSB)

Referring to God’s declaration about the sin and faithlessness of His people - here, the metaphor relates to the transforming work of the Holy Spirit, as part of God’s grace, reflecting Jesus’ mission of salvation. (18) Other Old Testament references to water symbolism can be found in Numbers 20:8-11 and Isaiah 12:3, and also Jewish Rabbinic thought associated the coming of the Messiah with the provision of water. (19) The “living water” then, can be seen as symbolizing the life-giving Holy Spirit (John 7:37-39). (20)

In v.13-14 Jesus refers to eternal life in God’s presence (Isaiah 55:1-3) as part of God’s eternal covenant with Jews and Gentiles (Isaiah 55:4, 5), since Jesus is about to address the woman’s sins. (21) At this point, the woman is unaware that Jesus is not talking about physical water, but rather is talking about a spiritual reality (v.15).

The seemingly abrupt directive Jesus gives her to call her husband (v.16) is part of Jesus’ goal to prompt the woman to repent. (22) In this way Jesus turns to the woman’s true need, since our God in His omniscience, always turns to a person’s greatest sin. (23)

In v.17-19, Jesus addresses the woman’s marital status. In general, Rabbis only allowed for three legal marriages, even when death was a factor. (24) Since she acknowledges that she does not have a husband, Jesus commends her truthfulness, while the woman is trying to navigate away from this troubling area in her life. (25) Jesus’ simple request is designed to expose her spiritual condition and her need for aforementioned *true* ‘living water’ - as He reveals to her His knowledge that she has had “five husbands” and is not married to the man she is with now (v.18). (26)

As the woman is obviously uncomfortable with the direction the conversation with Jesus is taking, she acknowledges Him as a prophet (v.19) and poses a theological question about the proper place of worship (v.20-24), which opens up the discussion about the coming Messiah (v. 25-26). (27)

The background to the woman’s question about the proper place of worship reveals the ethnic barriers between the Samaritans and Jews. For the Samaritans - only accepting the Pentateuch as canonical - they concluded the proper place of worship was Mt. Gerizim (Genesis 12:6-7) and *not* Jerusalem. (28) The woman’s reference to “our fathers” (v.20) indicates Abraham (Genesis 12:7) and Jacob (Genesis 33:20), her reference to “this

mountain” (v.20) goes back to Deuteronomy 11:29; 12:5-14; 27:12; Joshua 8:33. (29) While the Judeans had destroyed the Samaritan temple located at Mt. Gerizim in 120 BC, and the Samaritans had at one time defiled the temple at Jerusalem, this exposes the history of ethnic conflict and animosity. (30)

Jesus does not get involved in any of the details of this debate, but reveals to her (and us) that true worship is a matter of the heart; i.e. a profound truth about God’s nature, He desires ‘true worship’ to be honest with God. (31) The threefold response of Jesus (v.21-24) shows that the physical place of true worship is about to become obsolete (v.21), insists that salvation is from the Jews (i.e. from Jesus) (v.22), and explains the nature of true eternal worship (v.23-24). (32)

In referring to God as “the Father” - as Jesus’ common way of talking about God (e.g. John 2:16; 11:41; 12:27-28; 17:1) - He points out that the object of Samaritan worship is unknown to them. (33) Following this in v.23-24, Jesus clarifies that true worship is already present in and through Christ’s work, since He is the *true* temple (John 2:19-22) *and* the resurrection and the life (John 11:25) - hereby, “God is Spirit” (v.24) refers to what God is like, namely His character, along with His divine visible attributes - ultimately then, the fulfillment of true worship is found in God’s consummated kingdom (Revelation 21:22). (34)

Notably there is a progression in the woman gradually ‘coming closer to Jesus’ in faith, as He draws her to Himself, since she exclaims her expectation of a ‘teaching’ Messiah (v.25). This is based on a Samaritan liturgical understanding of the ‘*Taheb*’ (a Samaritan equivalent of the Messiah) who apparently is a Messiah who teaches. (35) This then prompts Jesus to reveal Himself to her as the Christ, the One she is (unaware of it) expecting: “I who speak to you am He,” (v.26) which affects her deeply, since she leaves her jar, goes back to town telling the people: “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?” (v.29) just as the disciples return. (36)

Jesus and The Disciples (John 4:31-38)

Meanwhile the disciples urged Him, “Rabbi, eat something.” But He told them, ***“I have food to eat that you know nothing about.”*** So the disciples asked one another, “Could someone have brought Him food?” Jesus

explained, ***“My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work. Do you not say, ‘There are still four months until the harvest’? I tell you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are ripe for harvest. Already the reaper draws his wages and gathers a crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may rejoice together. For in this case the saying ‘One sows and another reaps’ is true. I sent you to reap what you have not worked for; others have done the hard work, and now you have taken up their labor.”***

John 4:31–38 (BSB)

Commentary:

The departure of the woman and the return of the disciples tells us even more about who Jesus is and why He came. The initial confusion of the disciples, as they see Jesus talking with the woman, prior to her departure (v.27) reinforces the socio-ethnical barrier between Jews and Samaritans at the time. Hence, their astonishment is consistent with their cultural expectations, yet their silence shows their respect for Jesus. (37)

Prompted by Jesus’ disciples insisting that He eat something, Jesus uses the situation and circumstances to teach His disciples (“I have food to eat that you know nothing about” in v.32). (38) Jesus quickly clears up the misunderstandings of the disciples, when He says “My food is to do the will of Him who sent me and to finish His work” (v.34). (39)

Jesus then uses a possible Old Testament allusion (v.36) harking back to Amos 9:13:

“Behold, the days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when the plowman will overtake the reaper and the treader of grapes, the sower of seed. The mountains will drip with sweet wine, with which all the hills will flow.

Amos 9:13 (BSB)

This way Jesus points to both sower and reaper working together, applying this to the Samaritans (John 4:39-42) prior to this encounter with Christ. (40) The “harvest” (v.35) refers to the eternal life provided for those Samaritans who believe in Jesus - as such, Jesus sows, initiating the process, and the disciples will reap, seen in their completed work of evangelism. (41) We see here, that Jesus and His followers arrive at a moment in time when

God’s eschatological (‘end-time’) harvest takes place, as part of God’s redemptive plan. (42)

Jesus and The Samaritans (John 4:39-43)

Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in Jesus because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I ever did.” So when the Samaritans came to Him, they asked Him to stay with them, and He stayed two days. And many more believed because of His message. They said to the woman, “We now believe not only because of your words; we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man truly is the Savior of the world.” After two days, Jesus left for Galilee.
John 4:39–43 (BSB)

Commentary:

As Jesus reaches out to the Samaritan woman’s heart, we see the happy results now, given the Samaritan people coming to Jesus and “many of the Samaritans from that town believed in Jesus because of the woman’s testimony,” (v.39) and the woman’s impactful witness is only surpassed by Jesus Himself (v.42). Note, that it is possible that the ‘city of Samaria’ evangelized by Phillip a little later (Acts 8:4-8) was Sychar, or Shechem nearby. (43) The authority bestowed upon Jesus by the Samaritan witness (“Savior of the world” in v.42) can be seen as an indication of their animosity towards Roman imperial oppression (44) which by no means indicates that Jesus was always welcome by the Samaritans (Luke 9:51-56).

Conclusion:

In sum, we have seen in Jesus’s encounter with the Samaritan woman, an astounding example of how our Lord knows the hearts of all people, along with the fact that this is the longest recorded dialogue between Christ and an individual in the New Testament. We see here how Jesus helps others (the Samaritan woman and His disciples) to move from a fixation on literal meaning of His Words to grasp the spiritual meaning. (45)

Also, we learn here about the hostility between two ethnic groups, Jews and Samaritans, primarily a result of the Samaritans accepting only the Pentateuch, which Jesus successfully overcomes by exposing the

inadequateness of Samaritan religion, adequately revealing Himself as Messiah. (46)

In addition, the “water” Jesus refers to in John 4:13-14, refers to the Holy Spirit (see also John 7:39) which eliminates human thirst by springing up to eternal life in believers, satisfying the human soul of Christians. (47)

Worship that honors Christ is believing in Him and not worshiping a building or a structure, since Jesus declares both Samaritan worship on Mt. Gerizim and worship in the Jerusalem temple obsolete (John 4:21) - worshiping anyone or anything else than Jesus is idolatry. (48) Along these lines, since “God is Spirit” the Holy Spirit (John 3:5-8; 7:37-39) and Jesus as the Truth (John 1:14, 17; 14:6) provide the new ‘place of worship’ for believers. (49)

Furthermore, considering Jesus’s call to mission, the events and dialogue with the Samaritan woman, give us insight into evangelism, since man-made boundaries are no match for the gospel. (50) Here, Jesus shows us God’s perfect plan, purpose and timing, since Jesus reveals Himself to her as the promised Messiah (not the Samaritan ‘Taheb’) (v.26) only at the moment she is ready to accept His identity (v.25) and able to benefit from this revelation (v.39, 42). (51)

Likewise, among the main things we learn about in this dialogue, is that salvation originates in Judaism (i.e. in Christ) not Samaritan beliefs, with Judaism completed by the coming of Christ, salvation is now available to Jews and Gentile (all who believe in Jesus) and that as Jesus’ disciples, believers bring others to Him (Matthew 28:18-20). (52) The main point is that Jesus Christ, as the Messiah (“the Savior of the world” in v.42) is divinely able to search the hearts of people and reveal the truth of God - thus, true godly worship must be done “in spirit and in truth” (v.24) - believing in Jesus as the Son of God. (53)

What matters is that salvation is available to *anyone* who believes in Jesus Christ, since the grace of God is unlimited and not based on man-made barriers, boundaries and ethnic distinctions (see ‘Parable of Good Samaritan’ in Luke 10:30-37). (54) Jesus as the truthful and final Abrahamic offspring (Galatians 3:16) reveals God’s missionary heart in this encounter with the Samaritan woman, and we learn that no life is so broken that Jesus cannot fix it, since He seeks out and brings back to life those who are formerly spiritually dead - which foreshadows and finds its completion in Jesus’ own death and resurrection (55), as Jesus confronts the religious leaders:

> Jesus answered, ***“Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up again.”***

John 2:19 (BSB)

Appendix
(Jesus and the Samaritan Woman - John 4:1-43 BSB)

John 4:1–43 (BSB)

[1] When Jesus realized that the Pharisees were aware He was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John [2] (although it was not Jesus who baptized, but His disciples), [3] He left Judea and returned to Galilee. [4] Now He had to pass through Samaria. [5] So He came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. [6] Since Jacob’s well was there, Jesus, weary from His journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour. [7] When a

Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Give Me a drink.” [8] (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) [9] “You are a Jew,” said the woman. “How can You ask for a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?” (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) [10] Jesus answered, “If you knew the gift of God and who is asking you for a drink, you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.” [11] “Sir,” the woman replied, “You have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where then will You get this living water? [12] Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us this well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock?” [13] Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again. [14] But whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a fount of water springing up to eternal life.” [15] The woman said to Him, “Sir, give me this water so that I will not get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.” [16] Jesus told her, “Go, call your husband and come back.” [17] “I have no husband,” the woman replied. Jesus said to her, “You are correct to say that you have no husband. [18] In fact, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. You have spoken truthfully.” [19] “Sir,” the woman said, “I see that You are a prophet. [20] Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews say that the place where one must worship is in Jerusalem.” [21] “Believe Me, woman,” Jesus replied, “a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. [22] You worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. [23] But a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father is seeking such as these to worship Him. [24] God is Spirit, and His worshipers must worship Him in spirit and in truth.” [25] The woman said, “I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming. When He comes, He will explain everything to us.” [26] Jesus answered, “I who speak to you am He.” [27] Just then His disciples returned and were surprised that He was speaking with a woman. But no one asked Him, “What do You want from her?” or “Why are You talking with her?” [28] Then the woman left her water jar, went back into the town, and said to the people, [29] “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?” [30] So they left the town and made their way toward Jesus. [31] Meanwhile the disciples urged Him, “Rabbi, eat something.” [32] But He told them, “I have food to eat that you know nothing about.” [33] So the disciples asked one another, “Could someone have brought Him food?” [34] Jesus explained, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work. [35] Do you not say, ‘There are still four months until the harvest’? I tell you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are ripe for harvest. [36] Already the reaper draws his wages and gathers a crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may rejoice together. [37] For in this case the saying ‘One sows and another reaps’ is true. [38] I sent you to reap what you have not worked for; others have done the hard work, and now you have taken up their labor.” [39] Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in Jesus because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I ever did.” [40] So when the Samaritans came to Him, they asked Him to stay with them, and He stayed two days. [41] And many more believed because of His message. [42] They said to the woman, “We now believe not only because of your words; we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man truly is the Savior of the world.” [43] After two days, Jesus left for Galilee.

Notes

(1) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.664.
(2) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009., p.265.
(3) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.664.
(4) Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007., p.437.
(5) Duvall, J. Scott, and J. Daniel Hays, eds. *The Baker Illustrated Bible Background Commentary.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2020., p.780-781.
(6) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.301.
(7) Harris, Murray J. *John (Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament)*. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2015., p.88.
(8) Carson, D. A. *The Gospel According to John. Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991., p.214-215.
(9) Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020., p.373.
(10) Carson, D. A. *The Gospel According to John. Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991., p.215.
(11) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.664.
(12) Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007., p.438.
(13) Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020., p.373.
(14) Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007., p.438.
(15) Carson, D. A. *The Gospel According to John. Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991., p.218.
(16) Harris, Murray J. *John (Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament)*. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2015., p.90.
(17) Carson, D. A. *The Gospel According to John. Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991., p.218.
(18) Carson, D. A. *The Gospel According to John. Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991., p.219.
(19) Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007., p.438.
(20) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.302.
(21) Carson, D. A. *The Gospel According to John. Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991., p.220.

(22) Harris, Murray J. *John (Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament)*. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2015., p.92.
(23) Carson, D. A. *The Gospel According to John. Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991., p.221.
(24) Harris, Murray J. *John (Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament)*. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2015., p.92.
(25) Carson, D. A. *The Gospel According to John. Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991., p.221.
(26) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.665.
(27) Nelson, Thomas. *NIV Chronological Study Bible*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2014., p.1109.
(28) Carson, D. A. *The Gospel According to John. Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991., p.222.
(29) Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007., p.439.
(30) Nelson, Thomas. *NIV Chronological Study Bible*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2014., p.1111.
(31) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.666.
(32) Carson, D. A. *The Gospel According to John. Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991., p.222.
(33) Carson, D. A. *The Gospel According to John. Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991., p.223.
(34) Carson, D. A. *The Gospel According to John. Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991., p.224-226.
(35) Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007., p.439-440.
(36) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.666.
(37) Nelson, Thomas. *NIV Chronological Study Bible*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2014., p.1111.
(38) Carson, D. A. *The Gospel According to John. Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991., p.228.
(39) Carson, D. A. *The Gospel According to John. Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991., p.228.
(40) Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007., p.440.
(41) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.302.
(42) Carson, D. A. *The Gospel According to John. Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991., p.231.

(43) Carson, D. A. *The Gospel According to John. Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991., p.231-232.
(44) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009., p.266.
(45) Nelson, Thomas. *NIV Chronological Study Bible*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2014., p.1109.
(46) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011., p.1277.
(47) Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008., p.464.
(48) Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007., p.439.
(49) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.302.
(50) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009., p.265.
(51) Harris, Murray J. *John (Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament)*. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2015., p.95.
(52) Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020., p.373.
(53) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.666.
(54) Buzzard, Justin. *John: A 12-Week Study*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2014., p.30.
(55) Buzzard, Justin. *John: A 12-Week Study*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2014., p.31-32.

Bibliography

Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007.

Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009.

Buzzard, Justin. *John: A 12-Week Study*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2014.

Carson, D. A. *The Gospel According to John. Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991.

Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011.

Duvall, J. Scott, and J. Daniel Hays, eds. *The Baker Illustrated Bible Background Commentary.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2020.

Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995.

Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012.

Harris, Murray J. *John (Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament)*. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2015.

Nelson, Thomas. *NIV Chronological Study Bible*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2014.

Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008.

Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020.

The Last Supper and Upper Room Discourse of Jesus Christ

Introduction

As the ministry of Jesus Christ reaches its climax in His arrest, trial and crucifixion (followed by His resurrection and ascension) our Lord celebrates the so-called *Last Supper* with His disciples (recorded in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John), prior to aforementioned events. At this supper, Jesus and His disciples eat the traditional Jewish Passover meal at an undisclosed location (an 'upper room') somewhere in Jerusalem (1) and as such, His final instructions (John 14-16) are referred to as *Upper Room Discourse*. (2)

Jesus, as Son of God, uses this moment to prepare His disciples for His pending suffering (3) and to fulfil Messianic expectations, along with instituting the Lord's Supper as a commemoration for God's people, that is, the new covenant Jesus makes with all people (Jewish and non-Jewish) who will ever believe in Him - Christ's sacrificial death here frees believers of the slavery of sin and eternal separation from God.(4)

The following is an exploration of the Last Supper (briefly dealt with, as it is recorded in Matthew 26:20-30, Mark 14:17-26 and Luke 22:14-23) with a main focus on those events - the *Upper Room Discourse* and the *High Priestly Prayer* - as it is recorded in John 13-17. The theological and practical issues for Christians are dealt with in the form of a commentary.

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, spoke a blessing and broke it, and gave it to the disciples, saying, ***"Take and eat; this is My body."*** Then He took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, ***"Drink from it, all of you. This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in My Father's kingdom."***
Matthew 26:26–29 (BSB)

Commentary:

Before looking at the events as they unfold in the Gospel of John, this is a brief consideration of the *Last Supper* as it is recorded in the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew 26:20-30; Mark 14:17-26; Luke 22:14-23). (5) Each of the synoptic accounts contains some unique details, yet there is no discrepancy here, since a harmonization is possible.

Considering the Last Supper as recorded in Matthew, the opening passage above (not recorded in John's Gospel) provides a glimpse into God's plan and purpose for instituting this supper. All three Synoptic Gospels allude to this Passover ('Haggadah') liturgy and while later Church traditions have anachronistically attached theological meaning to Christ's body and blood (called 'transubstantiation,' 'consubstantiation,' etc.) Jesus is providing an enactment - using the Passover meal elements to represent and symbolize His pending substitutionary and sacrificial death on the cross. (6)

In Mark 14:17-26, we have a similar account of the events of the Last Supper, with an emphasis on the divine foreknowledge of Christ: Jesus predicts Judas' betrayal, He predicts the shedding of His own blood on the cross, He predicts the falling away of the disciples in Mark 14:27 (a quotation from the Old Testament in Zechariah 13:7), He predicts Peter's denials of Jesus (Mark 14:30) and He predicts the glorious messianic banquet at Christ's Second Coming on Judgment Day (Mark 14:25). (7) Before going to the Mount of Olives, the disciples sing Psalms of Praise ('Hallel') to close the celebration (Mark 14:26). (8)

Luke 22:14-23 provides a more detailed rendering of the Passover meal than Matthew and Mark. (9) In v.15-20 we are reminded of God's new covenant, which He accomplishes through Jesus' shed blood on the cross, poured out on behalf of His followers - the inauguration of this new covenant (to fulfill the 'old' Mosaic covenant) is accomplished through Christ's sacrificial death, which links back to the Old Testament (Isaiah 53; Exodus 24:8 and Jeremiah 31:31-34). (10)

It was now just before the Passover Feast, and Jesus knew that His hour had come to leave this world and return to the Father. Having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the very end. The evening meal was underway, and the devil had already put into the heart of Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had delivered all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was returning to God. So He got up from the supper, laid aside His outer garments, and wrapped a towel around His waist. After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and dry them with the towel that was around Him. He came to Simon Peter, who asked Him, "Lord, are You going to wash my feet?" Jesus replied, ***"You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."*** "Never shall You wash my feet!" Peter told Him. Jesus answered, ***"Unless I wash you, you have no part with Me."*** "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not only my feet, but my hands and my head as well!" Jesus told him, ***"Whoever has already bathed needs only to wash his feet, and he will be completely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you."*** For He knew who would betray Him. That is why He said, "Not all of you are clean." When Jesus had washed their feet and put on His outer garments, He reclined with them again and asked, ***"Do you know what I have done for you? You call Me Teacher and Lord, and rightly so, because I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example so that you should do as I have done for you. Truly, truly, I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them. I am not speaking about all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But this is to fulfill the Scripture: 'The one who shares My bread has lifted up his heel against Me.' I am telling you now before it happens, so that when it comes to pass, you will believe that I am He. Truly, truly, I tell you, whoever receives the one I send receives Me, and whoever receives Me receives the One who sent Me."*** After Jesus had said this, He became troubled in spirit and testified, ***"Truly, truly, I tell you, one of you will betray Me."*** The disciples looked at one another, perplexed as to which of them He meant. One of His disciples, the one whom Jesus loved, was reclining at His side. So Simon Peter motioned to him to ask Jesus which one He was talking about. Leaning back against Jesus, he asked, "Lord, who is it?" Jesus answered, ***"It is the one to whom I give this morsel after I have dipped it."*** Then He dipped the morsel and gave it to Judas son of Simon Iscariot. And when Judas had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him. Then Jesus said to Judas, ***"What you are about to do, do quickly."*** But no one at the table knew why Jesus had said this to him. Since Judas kept the money bag, some thought that Jesus was telling him to buy what was needed for the feast, or to give something to the poor. As soon as he had received the morsel, Judas went out into the night. When Judas had gone out, Jesus said, ***"Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify the Son in Himself—and will glorify Him at once. Little children, I am with you only a little while longer. You will look for Me, and as I said to the Jews, so now I***

say to you: 'Where I am going, you cannot come.' A new commandment I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you also must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another." "Lord, where are You going?" Simon Peter asked. Jesus answered, ***"Where I am going, you cannot follow Me now, but you will follow later."*** "Lord," said Peter, "why can't I follow You now? I will lay down my life for You." ***"Will you lay down your life for Me?"*** Jesus replied. ***"Truly, truly, I tell you, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times."***
John 13 (BSB)

Commentary:

Unlike the three Synoptic Gospels, John does not include Christ's instituting the Lord's Supper. (11) John arranges what Jesus teaches in the form of longer theological discourses, using symbolic language at times (15:1-8) and closes with the priestly prayer (17:1-26). (12)

While the date of the Last Supper in John's Gospel, appears to be different than the synoptic accounts, it can be inferred that the Passover occurred on Nisan 15 and that John's record of the supper is in harmony with this inference. (13) John 13 can be separated into four parts: Part one records the washing of the disciples' feet (v.1-17), part two is about Jesus predicting His betrayal (v.18-30), part three contains Jesus' command to love one another (v.31-35) and part four is Jesus' prediction of Peter's denial (v.36-38).

In part one, as Jesus sets out to wash the disciples' feet, we learn that there is spiritual warfare going on (v.2) and that Jesus' foot washing (an unusual thing a rabbi would do to his disciples) is intended to provide a memorable object lesson about servanthood and spiritual cleansing (v.8). (14) While Peter instantly refuses to participate, Jesus explains to him that this is a model of self-sacrificial love to be imitated, which prompts Peter to agree wholeheartedly (v.9). (15) This foot washing is also symbolic of the washing away of sins through Christ's sacrificial death on the cross (which does not apply to Judas Iscariot - see John 17:12) and is a demonstration of our Lord's love for all believers. (16)

In part two, Jesus predicts His betrayal by Judas Iscariot. In v.18 we here an explicit quotation from the Old Testament (Psalm 41:9) which shows us not only Christ's unique predictive ability, but also shows His divine messianic heart and mind that place the treachery of Judas in a framework of Scripture. (17)

Jesus is troubled about this (v.21) and along with the perplexity of the other disciples, the apostle John ('the beloved disciple') keeps a level head and learns from Jesus that Judas Iscariot is the traitor (v.26), possibly a whispered conversation, since the other disciples remain unaware of this (v.28-29). The sign by which Jesus reveals this ('dipping and giving the morsel' in v.26) is part of a cultural custom of the time, when the dish of broth is extended to the guest of honor. (19)

While this is the only time Satan is mentioned in John's gospel (20) we learn that Satan "enters into Judas" (v.22) and reveals that Jesus is fully in control of the situation, since He commands Judas (who is subdued by the devil) to do what he is about to do, sending Judas into the night to betray Jesus. Jesus Christ is fully in control of Satan and rules above all evil, even before His crucifixion, death and resurrection (recall Jesus overcoming the devil at His temptation in the wilderness in Matthew 4 and Luke 4).

This brings us to part three, where Jesus issues the new commandment to love one another. This is where the so-called 'Farewell Discourse' begins (13:31 to 16:30) - which is similar to the farewell discourse of Moses in Deuteronomy 31-33. (21)

As Judas (and with him, Satan) have departed into the night, Jesus announces His own glorification (v.31-32) and like a loving Father, addresses His true disciples as "little children" (v.33), since Christ is "the Son of Man," a title of divine glory. (22) Love is the main aspect of Christian discipleship in all of John's writings (23) and with it comes Jesus' new commandment of love - based on Leviticus 19:18 - and as Christians we are to love our fellow believer. (24)

In part four, Jesus predicts Peter's threefold denial (v.38), which would be a failure to fulfill the key requirement of the new commandment as followers of Jesus - since, Jesus predicts the denial, despite Peter's apparent affirmation to lay down his life for Christ (v.37). (25) Thankfully though we know that after His death and resurrection, Jesus reinstates Peter (John 21:14-19).

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe in Me as well. In My Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and welcome you into My presence, so that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going." "Lord," said

Thomas, “we do not know where You are going, so how can we know the way?” Jesus answered, ***“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. If you had known Me, you would know My Father as well. From now on you do know Him and have seen Him.”*** Philip said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us.” Jesus replied, ***“Philip, I have been with you all this time, and still you do not know Me? Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? The words I say to you, I do not speak on My own. Instead, it is the Father dwelling in Me, performing His works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me—or at least believe on account of the works themselves. Truly, truly, I tell you, whoever believes in Me will also do the works that I am doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in My name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me for anything in My name, I will do it. If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate to be with you forever— the Spirit of truth. The world cannot receive Him, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. But you do know Him, for He abides with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. In a little while the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you are in Me, and I am in you. Whoever has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me. The one who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and reveal Myself to him.”*** Judas (not Iscariot) asked Him, “Lord, why are You going to reveal Yourself to us and not to the world?” Jesus replied, ***“If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word. My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. Whoever does not love Me does not keep My words. The word that you hear is not My own, but it is from the Father who sent Me. All this I have spoken to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have told you. Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled; do not be afraid. You heard Me say, ‘I am going away, and I am coming back to you.’ If you loved Me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it happens, so that when it does happen, you will believe. I will not speak with you much longer, for the prince of this world is coming, and he has no claim on Me. But I do exactly what the Father has commanded Me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. Get up! Let us go on from here.***

John 14 (BSB)

Commentary:

Following the Passover meal, Jesus makes more detailed comments here, as part of His ‘Farewell Discourse’ (starting in 13:31), in which He provides words of encouragement and announces the coming of the Holy Spirit. (26) In this chapter, we can distinguish four parts: One, Jesus reveals that God’s House has many rooms (v.1-4); Two, Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life (v.5-14); Three, Jesus promises the Holy Spirit (v.15-20); Four, Jesus leaves His peace with the disciples (v.27-33).

In the first part, Jesus offers a wonderful description of heaven (His “Father’s house” in v.2) which is the place where, after death, believers dwell with God in His eternal presence - this is just as personal for us as Christians today, as it is recorded here in John’s Gospel. (27)

In the second part, the interchange between Jesus and Thomas reveals that Jesus *is* absolute truth, and the solely exclusive way to God (v.6). The implication in v.7 is that Thomas and the others do not yet truly know that Jesus is God Himself, yet v.26 encourages them that they will know who Jesus truly is following His resurrection. (28)

Similarly, Philip asks for some form of special revelation, just as Moses requested a manifestation of God’s glory (Exodus 33:18) which was granted - as such, Jesus responds to Philip by referring to His words and miracles (“works” in v.11) as a sufficient basis that reveals Christ’s divine identity. (29)

In v.12-14 Jesus reveals His oneness with God-the Father, and the “greater works” He refers to are part of the activity of the Holy Spirit, as He indwells all believers, and encourages them to fulfill the Great Commission. (30) Asking in Christ’s name, means asking and receiving “anything” according to God’s divine authority and His will (v.14).

In the third part, Jesus unequivocally promises the coming of the Holy Spirit. This is the first of five “Paraclete” passages we find in the Farewell Discourse. The Greek translation as “Paraclete” can be rendered as “Counselor,” “Comforter,” and “Advocate,” which are different ways of referring to the Holy Spirit - it is through this “Spirit of truth” that believers abide in Christ, and He is the safeguard against any alleged revelations that go beyond Him (e.g. Gnostic revelations). (31)

Jude (not Judas Iscariot) elicits the last query in this chapter, as he asks a good and valid question about the extent of Jesus revealing Himself. In response, Jesus makes it clear that love and obedience to Him (v.23-24) are the basis for a personal relationship with Christ - it is a matter of faith. (32)

The fourth and last part in this chapter are a summary of the previous three parts - and with the “prince of this world” (Satan) approaching, the giving of Christ’s peace (v.27) is part of His encouragement for the disciples, who have yet to persevere through the death until the resurrection of Jesus. (33) The closing verses (v.30-31) indicate that Jesus is now readying Himself to go to the cross: “let us go from here” indicates that the group is getting ready to go to the Mount of Olives.

“I am the true vine, and My Father is the keeper of the vineyard. He cuts off every branch in Me that bears no fruit, and every branch that does bear fruit, He prunes to make it even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in Me, and I will remain in you. Just as no branch can bear fruit by itself unless it remains in the vine, neither can you bear fruit unless

you remain in Me. I am the vine and you are the branches. The one who remains in Me, and I in him, will bear much fruit. For apart from Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in Me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers. Such branches are gathered up, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you remain in Me and My words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to My Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, proving yourselves to be My disciples. As the Father has loved Me, so have I loved you. Remain in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will remain in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and remain in His love. I have told you these things so that My joy may be in you and your joy may be complete. This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not understand what his master is doing. But I have called you friends, because everything I have learned from My Father I have made known to you. You did not choose Me, but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will remain—so that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He will give you. This is My command to you: Love one another. If the world hates you, understand that it hated Me first. If you were of the world, it would love you as its own. Instead, the world hates you, because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. Remember the word that I spoke to you: 'No servant is greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will persecute you as well; if they kept My word, they will keep yours as well. But they will treat you like this because of My name, since they do not know the One who sent Me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin. Now, however, they have no excuse for their sin. Whoever hates Me hates My Father as well. If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin; but now they have seen and hated both Me and My Father. But this is to fulfill what is written in their Law: 'They hated Me without reason.' When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father —the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father—He will testify about Me. And you also must testify, because you have been with Me from the beginning."

John 15 (BSB)

Commentary:

This chapter can be separated into three parts: In the first part Jesus refers to Himself as the True Vine (v.1-8). In the second part (v.9-17) Jesus

reiterates and expands upon the ‘love command’ (the “new commandment” in John 13:31-35). In the third part Jesus warns about and explains the hatred of the world (v.18-27).

The first part contains the allegory of Jesus as the vine, with His followers as the branches (v.1-6) and what this allegory (as extended metaphor) means (v.7-17). (34) The call to abide in Christ leaves only two options: that is to remain in Jesus (as faithful believers) along with being pruned (disciplined), or to be cut off and burned (v.2,6) (as false ‘believers’ - best illustrated in 1 John 2:19). This harsh reality is important for us as Christians to grasp, since there will be those who say they are believers, when in fact they are not (see Matthew 7:21-23).

For those who are believers, the second part provides an intimate perspective Christ uses to shift the focus from allegory to true friendship (v.13-15) with Christ as the divine Head of the Christian body of believers (v.9-12). In other words, a personal relationship with Christ in obedience to His commandments, will manifest itself in orthodox Christian theology and practice. (36) Note, that it is God who elects His own (v.16), which is the Reformed doctrine of predestination, since Jesus is the “author and perfector of our Faith” (Hebrews 12:2). Of all world religions, Christianity is unique in that God reveals Himself personally to His followers to obey and know Him, for God’s joy and the joy of His children (v.11). (37)

In the last part Jesus explains the hatred of the world toward Himself and His followers. In v.18-21 we learn that being united in Christ entails suffering and persecution, in other words, just as Christ suffered and died on the cross, so too, we as Christians are persecuted for believing in Jesus. (38)

This theme of persecution continues in v.20-25. Specifically, in v.25 Jesus uses and explicit Old Testament quotation (Psalm 35:19; Psalm 69:4 is also possible) that links back to the suffering of a person who is zealous for God, but is nevertheless persecuted by the enemies of God, because of that zeal - yet, despite the seemingly tremendous opposition, Jesus (like the psalmist) goes the way of the righteous sufferer, anticipating that God will vindicate Him in the end. (39)

Lastly, in v.26-27, Jesus reiterates the coming of the Holy Spirit, whom Christ Himself will send. This is a wonderful encouragement, since in spite of the hatred of the world, all true disciples who are joined to the Paraclete (“Spirit of truth” in v.26) will be an undeniable witness to God’s revelation in and through Jesus Christ.

“I have told you these things so that you will not fall away. They will put you out of the synagogues. In fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God. They will do these things because they have not known the Father or Me. But I have told you these things so that when their hour comes, you will remember that I told you about them. I did not tell you these things from the beginning, because I was with you. Now, however, I am going to Him who sent Me; yet none of you asks Me, ‘Where are You going?’ Instead, your hearts are filled with sorrow because I have told you these things. But I tell you the truth, it is for your benefit that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. And when He comes, He will convict the world in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because they do not believe in Me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will no longer see Me; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world has been condemned. I still have much to tell you, but you cannot yet bear to hear it. However, when the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth. For He will not speak on His own, but He will speak what He hears, and He will declare to you what is to come. He will glorify Me by taking from what is Mine and disclosing it to you. Everything that belongs to the Father is Mine. That is why I said that the Spirit will take from what is Mine and disclose it to you. In a little while you will see Me no more, and then after a little while you will see Me.” Then some of His disciples asked one another, “Why is He telling us, ‘In a little while you will not see Me, and then after a little while you will see Me’ and ‘Because I am going to the Father’?” They kept asking, “Why is He saying, ‘a little while’? We do not understand what He is saying.” Aware that they wanted to question Him, Jesus said to them, “***Are you asking one another why I said, ‘In a little while you will not see Me, and then after a little while you will see Me’? Truly, truly, I tell you, you will weep and wail while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. A woman has pain in childbirth because her time has come; but when she brings forth her child, she forgets her anguish because of her joy that a child has been born into the world. So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will***

take away your joy. In that day you will no longer ask Me anything. Truly, truly, I tell you, whatever you ask the Father in My name, He will give you. Until now you have not asked for anything in My name. Ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be complete. I have spoken these things to you in figures of speech. An hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you this way, but will tell you plainly about the Father. In that day you will ask in My name. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf. For the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me and have believed that I came from God. I came from the Father and entered the world. In turn, I will leave the world and go to the Father." His disciples said, "See, now You are speaking plainly and without figures of speech. Now we understand that You know all things and that You have no need for anyone to question You. Because of this, we believe that You came from God." ***"Do you finally believe?"*** Jesus replied. ***"Look, an hour is coming and has already come when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and you will leave Me all alone. Yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. I have told you these things so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take courage; I have overcome the world!"***

John 16 (BSB)

Commentary:

In this chapter, Jesus vocalizes His foregoing admonitions and encouragement. The four parts here are: One, Jesus foretells of persecution (v.1-4). Two, Jesus again promises the Holy Spirit (v.5-16). Three, Jesus predicts that grief will turn to joy (v.17-22). Four, Jesus encourages to ask in His name (v.23-33).

In the first part, Jesus warns the disciples of persecution that is to come upon them (v.2-3). Being expelled from the Jewish Synagogues and even killed by their fellow Jewish kinsman is part of this persecution. Jesus tells them all of this in advance so that they may be prepared and persevere in faith (v.1). Those who partake in these persecutions do not truly know God, but think they are serving God, as Jesus explains here. (41)

In the second part, Jesus promises the coming of the Holy Spirit (the "Advocate") whom Jesus will send (v.7) - which happens at Pentecost (Acts 2). In v.8-11 we find out how the Holy Spirit will convict the world, that is for the sin of unbelief in Christ, also for the righteousness of Christ as He returns to God-the Father, and the judgment of Satan ("the prince of this world") through Christ's work on the cross. (42) In v.13-15 we are reminded that when the Holy Spirit comes (after Christ's resurrection and ascension) the

disciples (and all believers) will be able to hear Christ's words spoken into their hearts. (43)

In part three, Jesus explains what He means by "a little while" (v.16), here using an illustration of childbirth (v.21). Our Lord is making the point that there is a change of heart underway for His disciples - from mourning to joy - which is a common Old Testament image (Isaiah 13:8; 21:3; 26:16-21) and often links to the end-time salvation brought about by the Messiah. (44) Thus, v.22 refers to both the resurrection and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

Part four begins with Jesus inviting the disciples to 'ask in His name' (v.23-28). This means that after the resurrection of Christ and the coming of the Holy Spirit, the disciples (and us as Christians today) can ask for anything in Jesus' name - which, if done by His power, authority and His will - can have a strong impact. (45)

In the closing part of this 'Farewell Discourse' (v.29-33) the disciples manifest a sense of growing faith (v.29-30), yet Jesus does mildly rebuke them (v.31-32) predicting their temporal abandonment of Him. However, in His grace, mercy and love, Jesus reassures them of having "peace in the world" (v.33) in spite of tribulations, because Christ has "overcome the world" (v.33). (46)

When Jesus had spoken these things, He lifted up His eyes to heaven and said, ***"Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son may glorify You. For You granted Him authority over all people, so that He may give eternal life to all those You have given Him. Now this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent. I have glorified You on earth by accomplishing the work You gave Me to do. And now, Father, glorify Me in Your presence with the glory I had with You before the world existed. I have revealed Your name to those You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours; You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. Now they know that everything You have given Me comes from You. For I have given them the words You gave Me, and they have received them. They knew with certainty that I came from You, and they believed that You sent Me. I ask on their behalf. I do not ask on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those You have given Me; for they are Yours. All I have is Yours, and all You have is Mine; and in them I have been glorified. I will no longer be in the***

world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, protect them by Your name, the name You gave Me, so that they may be one as We are one. While I was with them, I protected and preserved them by Your name, the name You gave Me. Not one of them has been lost, except the son of destruction, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled. But now I am coming to You; and I am saying these things while I am in the world, so that they may have My joy fulfilled within them. I have given them Your word and the world has hated them; for they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I am not asking that You take them out of the world, but that You keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by the truth; Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I have also sent them into the world. For them I sanctify Myself, so that they too may be sanctified by the truth. I am not asking on behalf of them alone, but also on behalf of those who will believe in Me through their message, that all of them may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I am in You. May they also be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. I have given them the glory You gave Me, so that they may be one as We are one— I in them and You in Me—that they may be perfectly united, so that the world may know that You sent Me and have loved them just as You have loved Me. Father, I want those You have given Me to be with Me where I am, that they may see the glory You gave Me because You loved Me before the foundation of the world. Righteous Father, although the world has not known You, I know You, and they know that You sent Me. And I have made Your name known to them and will continue to make it known, so that the love You have for Me may be in them, and I in them."

John 17 (BSB)

Commentary:

The Last Supper and Upper Room Discourse are complimented by Christ's 'High-Priestly Prayer' (so-called, because of Jesus' intercessory words). (47) There is a threefold partition here, namely: One, Jesus praying for Himself (v.1-5). Two, Jesus praying for the disciples (v.6-17). Three, Jesus praying for all believers (v.20-26).

In the first part, Jesus prays for His own glorification as He gives an account of His mission and ministry. (48) This glorification also includes a bestowal of eternal life on all God-the Father has given to Christ (v.3) - hereby, eternal life means having a personal relationship with the Father through the Son (Jesus Christ). (49)

In part two, Jesus prays for His disciples, which is primarily a prayer of protection (v.11, 15), due to Christ's pending crucifixion and death (prior to His resurrection). Having singled out Judas, His betrayer (v.12) - Jesus prays for His disciples who belong to the Father, and Jesus having been glorified in them (v.10) as well as their sanctification, since they are set apart from the world. (50)

In the third part, Jesus prays for all believers. Here, picking up again on His request for unity (v.11) this becomes the prevalent theme (v.21-23) and in some way mirrors the unity of the Trinity (v.21, 22, 24) - thus effective evangelism, rests upon unified believers coming together in love to fulfill the Great Commission (v.26). (51)

Conclusion:

In sum, we have here in the Last Supper, Upper Room Discourse and High Priestly prayer many theological and practical points that Jesus makes. First, as seen in the Synoptic rendering of the Last Supper, we realize that Christ's atoning death represented in this event is not just a mere re-enactment, but calls us as believers to proclaim the 'Good News,' before God's kingdom is established in all its completion. (52) The illustration of the Lord's Supper - as given to us by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 should not be a thoughtless, uninspired ritual, but should bring us closer to Christ, through the work and power of the Holy Spirit.

Second, concerning the Last Supper as recorded in John's Gospel (John 13), Jesus is rendered as the new Moses, since He institutes a new covenant with His disciples and all who will ever believe in Him - Christ's washing of the disciples feet is also a spiritual cleansing, anticipating the coming of the Holy Spirit (to whom Jesus alludes to several times) and firmly anchored by the two explicit Old Testament quotations Jesus uses in His Farewell Discourse (John 13:18 links to Psalm 41:9 and John 15:25 links to Psalm 69:4; Psalm 35:19). (53)

Third, it is important to emphasize that the crucifixion is not something that just happened to Jesus. As we see in John 13, Jesus displays His divine sovereignty and omniscient attributes, since He not only foretells the things to come, but also commands Satan (after having entered Judas) - thereby demonstrating that Christ is fully able to engage and defeat all evil spiritual warfare, while being in full control of the situation.

Fourth, in addition to firmly anchoring His speech in the Old Testament, Jesus uses the allegory of the vine, to demonstrate that He is the new and true vine (John 15:1-8). Abiding in the vine, as Christians are the branches,

means to obey Christ’s commands, foremost His command to love one another. (54) As believers, Jesus prunes us, which means that through His atoning work on the cross He makes us the faithful branches He want us to be. (55)

Finally, in spite of trials and persecution Jesus tells us about, He reassures us of His divine guidance and presence, as we consider Christ’s ‘High-priestly Prayer’ (John 17). Jesus encourages us here as Christians to maintain unity in love for one another, and we can rest assured that Jesus is just as much praying for us today for our protection and sanctification, as He makes a request for His own glorification in order to reveal God-the Father to us. (56)

> From His fullness we have all received grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is Himself God and is at the Father’s side, has made Him known.
>
> John 1:16–18 (BSB)

Notes

(1) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011., p.859.
(2) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011., p.1498.
(3) *Nelson's Complete Book Of Bible Maps And Charts*, 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010., p.333.
(4) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.138.
(5) See Appendix A for complete text passages of the related Synoptic Gospels and the passages in John's Gospel.
(6) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009., p.384-387.
(7) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.176-177.
(8) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009., p.387.
(9) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009., p.386.
(10) Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007., p.383.
(11) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009., p.385.
(12) *Nelson's Complete Book Of Bible Maps And Charts*, 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010., p.333-334.
(13) Carson, D. A., France, R. T., Motyer, J. A., and G. J. Wenham, eds. *New Bible Commentary*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2010., p.1053.
(14) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009., p.385.
(15) Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020., p.386.
(16) Buzzard, Justin. *John: A 12-Week Study*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2014., p.60.
(17) Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007., p.485.
(18) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009., p.386.
(19) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.313.

(20) Pate, C. Marvin. *The Writings of John: A Survey of the Gospel, Epistles, and Apocalypse*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011., p.146.
(21) Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007., p.483-484.
(22) Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007., p.487.
(23) Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020., p.386.
(24) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.313.
(25) Pate, C. Marvin. *The Writings of John: A Survey of the Gospel, Epistles, and Apocalypse*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011., p.147.
(26) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009., p.388.
(27) Buzzard, Justin. *John: A 12-Week Study*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2014., p.64.
(28) Pate, C. Marvin. *The Writings of John: A Survey of the Gospel, Epistles, and Apocalypse*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011., p.152-153.
(29) Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007., p.489.
(30) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.314.
(31) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.314.
(32) Pate, C. Marvin. *The Writings of John: A Survey of the Gospel, Epistles, and Apocalypse*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011., p.155.
(33) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009., p.389.
(34) Pate, C. Marvin. *The Writings of John: A Survey of the Gospel, Epistles, and Apocalypse*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011., p.158.
(35) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009., p.390.
(36) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.316.
(37) Buzzard, Justin. *John: A 12-Week Study*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2014., p.63.
(38) Pate, C. Marvin. *The Writings of John: A Survey of the Gospel, Epistles, and Apocalypse*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011., p.162.
(39) Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007., p.494.
(40) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.316.
(41) Pate, C. Marvin. *The Writings of John: A Survey of the Gospel, Epistles, and Apocalypse*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011., p.163.
(42) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.316.

(43) Nelson, Thomas. *NIV Chronological Study Bible*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2014., p.1235.
(44) Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007., p.495.
(45) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009., p.392.
(46) Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020., p.387.
(47) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009., p.392.
(48) Buzzard, Justin. *John: A 12-Week Study*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2014., p.61.
(49) Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020., p.388.
(50) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.317.
(51) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009., p.393-394.
(52) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009., p.387.
(53) Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007., p.483-485.
(54) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.315.
(55) Buzzard, Justin. *John: A 12-Week Study*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2014., p.64.
(56) Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020., p.388.

Bibliography

Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007.

Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009.

Buzzard, Justin. *John: A 12-Week Study*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2014.

Carson, D. A., France, R. T., Motyer, J. A., and G. J. Wenham, eds. *New Bible Commentary*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2010.

Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011.

Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012.

Nelson's Complete Book Of Bible Maps And Charts, 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010.

Nelson, Thomas. *NIV Chronological Study Bible*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2014.

Pate, C. Marvin. *The Writings of John: A Survey of the Gospel, Epistles, and Apocalypse*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011.

Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020.

Appendix A

The Last Supper (Matthew 26:20-30)

(Mark 14:17–26; Luke 22:14–23; 1 Corinthians 11:17–34)

20When evening came, Jesus was reclining with the twelve disciples. 21And while they were eating, He said to them, “Truly I tell you, one of you will betray Me.”

22They were deeply grieved and began to ask Him one after another, “Surely not I, Lord?”

23Jesus answered, “The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with Me will betray Me. 24The Son of Man will go just as it is written about Him, but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed. It would be better for him if he had not been born.”

25Then Judas, who would betray Him, said, “Surely not I, Rabbi?”

Jesus answered, “You have said it yourself.”

26While they were eating, Jesus took bread, spoke a blessing and broke it, and gave it to the disciples, saying, “Take and eat; this is My body.”

27Then He took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. 28This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. 29I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in My Father’s kingdom.”

30And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

The Last Supper (Mark 14:17-26)

(Matthew 26:20–30; Luke 22:14–23; 1 Corinthians 11:17–34)

17When evening came, Jesus arrived with the Twelve. 18And while they were reclining and eating, Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, one of you who is eating with Me will betray Me.”

19They began to be grieved and to ask Him one after another, “Surely not I?”

20He answered, “It is one of the Twelve—the one who is dipping his hand
into the bowl with Me. 21The Son of Man will go just as it is written about Him,
but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed! It would be better for him if he
had not been born.”

22While they were eating, Jesus took bread, spoke a blessing and broke it,
and gave it to the disciples, saying, “Take it; this is My body.”

23Then He took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, and they all drank
from it. 24He said to them, “This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured
out for many. 25Truly I tell you, I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine
until that day when I drink it anew in the kingdom of God.”

26And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

The Last Supper (Luke 22:14-23)

(Matthew 26:20–30; Mark 14:17–26; 1 Corinthians 11:17–34)

14When the hour had come, Jesus reclined at the table with His apostles.
15And He said to them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you
before My suffering. 16For I tell you that I will not eat it again until it is
fulfilled in the kingdom of God.”

17After taking the cup, He gave thanks and said, “Take this and divide it
among yourselves. 18For I tell you that I will not drink of the fruit of the vine
from now on until the kingdom of God comes.”

19And He took the bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them,
saying, “This is My body, given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.”

20In the same way, after supper He took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new
covenant in My blood, which is poured out for you.

21Look! The hand of My betrayer is with Mine on the table. 22Indeed, the Son
of Man will go as it has been determined, but woe to that man who betrays
Him.”

23Then they began to question among themselves which of them was going
to do this.

The Last Supper, Upper Room Discourse and High Priestly Prayer (John 13-17)

Jesus Washes His Disciples' Feet

13 1It was now just before the Passover Feast, and Jesus knew that His
hour had come to leave this world and return to the Father. Having loved His
own who were in the world, He loved them to the very end. 2The evening
meal was underway, and the devil had already put into the heart of Judas,
the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus.

3Jesus knew that the Father had delivered all things into His hands, and that
He had come from God and was returning to God. 4So He got up from the
supper, laid aside His outer garments, and wrapped a towel around His waist.
5After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples'
feet and dry them with the towel that was around Him.

6He came to Simon Peter, who asked Him, "Lord, are You going to wash my
feet?"

7Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will
understand."

8"Never shall You wash my feet!" Peter told Him.

Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with Me."

9"Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not only my feet, but my hands and my
head as well!"

10Jesus told him, "Whoever has already bathed needs only to wash his feet,
and he will be completely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you."
11For He knew who would betray Him. That is why He said, "Not all of you are
clean."

12When Jesus had washed their feet and put on His outer garments, He
reclined with them again and asked, "Do you know what I have done for you?
13You call Me Teacher and Lord, and rightly so, because I am. 14So if I, your
Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one
another's feet. 15I have set you an example so that you should do as I have
done for you. 16Truly, truly, I tell you, no servant is greater than his master,
nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. 17If you know these
things, you will be blessed if you do them.

Jesus Predicts His Betrayal

(Psalms 41:1–13)

18I am not speaking about all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But this is
to fulfill the Scripture: ‘The one who shares My bread has lifted up his heel
against Me.’ 19I am telling you now before it happens, so that when it comes
to pass, you will believe that I am He. 20Truly, truly, I tell you, whoever
receives the one I send receives Me, and whoever receives Me receives the
One who sent Me.”

21After Jesus had said this, He became troubled in spirit and testified, “Truly,
truly, I tell you, one of you will betray Me.”

22The disciples looked at one another, perplexed as to which of them He
meant. 23One of His disciples, the one whom Jesus loved, was reclining at His
side. 24So Simon Peter motioned to him to ask Jesus which one He was
talking about. 25Leaning back against Jesus, he asked, “Lord, who is it?”

26Jesus answered, “It is the one to whom I give this morsel after I have
dipped it.” Then He dipped the morsel and gave it to Judas son of Simon
Iscariot. 27And when Judas had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him.

Then Jesus said to Judas, “What you are about to do, do quickly.” 28But no
one at the table knew why Jesus had said this to him. 29Since Judas kept the
money bag, some thought that Jesus was telling him to buy what was
needed for the feast, or to give something to the poor. 30As soon as he had
received the morsel, Judas went out into the night.

Love One Another

(Romans 12:9–13; 1 John 3:11–24)

31When Judas had gone out, Jesus said, “Now the Son of Man is glorified, and
God is glorified in Him. 32If God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify the
Son in Himself—and will glorify Him at once.

33Little children, I am with you only a little while longer. You will look for Me,
and as I said to the Jews, so now I say to you: ‘Where I am going, you cannot
come.’

34A new commandment I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so
you also must love one another. 35By this everyone will know that you are My
disciples, if you love one another.”

Jesus Predicts Peter’s Denial

(Matthew 26:31–35; Mark 14:27–31; Luke 22:31–38)

36“Lord, where are You going?” Simon Peter asked.

Jesus answered, “Where I am going, you cannot follow Me now, but you will
follow later.”

37 “Lord,” said Peter, “why can’t I follow You now? I will lay down my life for
You.”

38 “Will you lay down your life for Me?” Jesus replied. “Truly, truly, I tell you,
before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.

In My Father’s House Are Many Rooms

14 1 “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe in Me
as well. 2 In My Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have
told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and
prepare a place for you, I will come back and welcome you into My presence,
so that you also may be where I am. 4 You know the way to the place where I
am going.”

The Way, the Truth, and the Life

5 “Lord,” said Thomas, “we do not know where You are going, so how can we
know the way?”

6 Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to
the Father except through Me. 7 If you had known Me, you would know My
Father as well. From now on you do know Him and have seen Him.”

8 Philip said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and that will be enough for
us.”

9 Jesus replied, “Philip, I have been with you all this time, and still you do not
know Me? Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father. How can you say,
‘Show us the Father’? 10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the
Father is in Me? The words I say to you, I do not speak on My own. Instead, it
is the Father dwelling in Me, performing His works. 11 Believe Me that I am in
the Father and the Father is in Me—or at least believe on account of the
works themselves.

12 Truly, truly, I tell you, whoever believes in Me will also do the works that I
am doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to
the Father. 13 And I will do whatever you ask in My name, so that the Father
may be glorified in the Son. 14 If you ask Me for anything in My name, I will
do it.

Jesus Promises the Holy Spirit

(John 16:5–16)

15 If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. 16 And I will ask the
Father, and He will give you another Advocate to be with you forever— 17 the
Spirit of truth. The world cannot receive Him, because it neither sees Him nor
knows Him. But you do know Him, for He abides with you and will be in you.

18I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. 19In a little while the
world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you also will
live. 20On that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you are in Me,
and I am in you. 21Whoever has My commandments and keeps them is the
one who loves Me. The one who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I
will love him and reveal Myself to him."

22Judas (not Iscariot) asked Him, "Lord, why are You going to reveal Yourself
to us and not to the world?"

23Jesus replied, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word. My Father will love
him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. 24Whoever does
not love Me does not keep My words. The word that you hear is not My own,
but it is from the Father who sent Me.

25All this I have spoken to you while I am still with you. 26But the Advocate,
the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, will teach you all
things and will remind you of everything I have told you.

Peace I Leave with You

27Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the
world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled; do not be afraid. 28You heard
Me say, 'I am going away, and I am coming back to you.' If you loved Me,
you would rejoice that I am going to the Father, because the Father is
greater than I. 29And now I have told you before it happens, so that when it
does happen, you will believe.

30I will not speak with you much longer, for the prince of this world is coming,
and he has no claim on Me. 31But I do exactly what the Father has
commanded Me, so that the world may know that I love the Father.

Get up! Let us go on from here.

Jesus the True Vine

(Isaiah 27:1–13)

15 1"I am the true vine, and My Father is the keeper of the vineyard. 2He
cuts off every branch in Me that bears no fruit, and every branch that does
bear fruit, He prunes to make it even more fruitful. 3You are already clean
because of the word I have spoken to you. 4Remain in Me, and I will remain
in you. Just as no branch can bear fruit by itself unless it remains in the vine,
neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in Me.

5I am the vine and you are the branches. The one who remains in Me, and I
in him, will bear much fruit. For apart from Me you can do nothing. 6If anyone

does not remain in Me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers. Such branches are gathered up, thrown into the fire, and burned. 7If you remain in Me and My words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8This is to My Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, proving yourselves to be My disciples.

No Greater Love

9As the Father has loved Me, so have I loved you. Remain in My love. 10If you keep My commandments, you will remain in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and remain in His love. 11I have told you these things so that My joy may be in you and your joy may be complete.

12This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.

14You are My friends if you do what I command you. 15No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not understand what his master is doing. But I have called you friends, because everything I have learned from My Father I have made known to you. 16You did not choose Me, but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will remain—so that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He will give you. 17This is My command to you: Love one another.

The Hatred of the World

18If the world hates you, understand that it hated Me first. 19If you were of the world, it would love you as its own. Instead, the world hates you, because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world.

20Remember the word that I spoke to you: 'No servant is greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will persecute you as well; if they kept My word, they will keep yours as well. 21But they will treat you like this because of My name, since they do not know the One who sent Me. 22If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin. Now, however, they have no excuse for their sin.

23Whoever hates Me hates My Father as well. 24If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin; but now they have seen and hated both Me and My Father. 25But this is to fulfill what is written in their Law: 'They hated Me without reason.'

26When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father—He will testify about Me. 27And you also must testify, because you have been with Me from the beginning.

Persecution Foretold

(Acts 23:12–22)

16 1“I have told you these things so that you will not fall away. 2They will
put you out of the synagogues. In fact, a time is coming when anyone who
kills you will think he is offering a service to God. 3They will do these things
because they have not known the Father or Me. 4But I have told you these
things so that when their hour comes, you will remember that I told you
about them. I did not tell you these things from the beginning, because I was
with you.

The Promise of the Holy Spirit

(John 14:15–26)

5Now, however, I am going to Him who sent Me; yet none of you asks Me,
‘Where are You going?’ 6Instead, your hearts are filled with sorrow because I
have told you these things. 7But I tell you the truth, it is for your benefit that
I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if
I go, I will send Him to you.

8And when He comes, He will convict the world in regard to sin and
righteousness and judgment: 9in regard to sin, because they do not believe
in Me; 10in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father and
you will no longer see Me; 11and in regard to judgment, because the prince of
this world has been condemned.

12I still have much to tell you, but you cannot yet bear to hear it. 13However,
when the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth. For He will not
speak on His own, but He will speak what He hears, and He will declare to
you what is to come. 14He will glorify Me by taking from what is Mine and
disclosing it to you. 15Everything that belongs to the Father is Mine. That is
why I said that the Spirit will take from what is Mine and disclose it to you.

16In a little while you will see Me no more, and then after a little while you
will see Me.”

Grief Will Turn to Joy

17Then some of His disciples asked one another, “Why is He telling us, ‘In a
little while you will not see Me, and then after a little while you will see Me’
and ‘Because I am going to the Father’?” 18They kept asking, “Why is He
saying, ‘a little while’? We do not understand what He is saying.”

19Aware that they wanted to question Him, Jesus said to them, “Are you
asking one another why I said, ‘In a little while you will not see Me, and then
after a little while you will see Me’? 20Truly, truly, I tell you, you will weep and
wail while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy.
21A woman has pain in childbirth because her time has come; but when she
brings forth her child, she forgets her anguish because of her joy that a child

has been born into the world. 22So also you have sorrow now, but I will see
you again and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy.

Ask in My Name

(Matthew 18:19–20)

23In that day you will no longer ask Me anything. Truly, truly, I tell you,
whatever you ask the Father in My name, He will give you. 24Until now you
have not asked for anything in My name. Ask and you will receive, so that
your joy may be complete.

25I have spoken these things to you in figures of speech. An hour is coming
when I will no longer speak to you this way, but will tell you plainly about the
Father. 26In that day you will ask in My name. I am not saying that I will ask
the Father on your behalf. 27For the Father Himself loves you, because you
have loved Me and have believed that I came from God. 28I came from the
Father and entered the world. In turn, I will leave the world and go to the
Father."

29His disciples said, "See, now You are speaking plainly and without figures
of speech. 30Now we understand that You know all things and that You have
no need for anyone to question You. Because of this, we believe that You
came from God."

31"Do you finally believe?" Jesus replied. 32"Look, an hour is coming and has
already come when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and you will
leave Me all alone. Yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. 33I
have told you these things so that in Me you may have peace. In the world
you will have tribulation. But take courage; I have overcome the world!"

Prayer for the Son

17 1When Jesus had spoken these things, He lifted up His eyes to heaven
and said, "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son may
glorify You. 2For You granted Him authority over all people, so that He may
give eternal life to all those You have given Him. 3Now this is eternal life, that
they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have
sent. 4I have glorified You on earth by accomplishing the work You gave Me
to do. 5And now, Father, glorify Me in Your presence with the glory I had with
You before the world existed.

Prayer for the Disciples

6 I have revealed Your name to those You have given Me out of the world.
They were Yours; You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. 7 Now
they know that everything You have given Me comes from You. 8 For I have
given them the words You gave Me, and they have received them. They
knew with certainty that I came from You, and they believed that You sent
Me.

9 I ask on their behalf. I do not ask on behalf of the world, but on behalf of
those You have given Me; for they are Yours. 10 All I have is Yours, and all You
have is Mine; and in them I have been glorified. 11 I will no longer be in the
world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to You.

Holy Father, protect them by Your name, the name You gave Me, so that
they may be one as We are one. 12 While I was with them, I protected and
preserved them by Your name, the name You gave Me. Not one of them has
been lost, except the son of destruction, so that the Scripture would be
fulfilled.

13 But now I am coming to You; and I am saying these things while I am in the
world, so that they may have My joy fulfilled within them. 14 I have given
them Your word and the world has hated them; for they are not of the world,
just as I am not of the world.

15 I am not asking that You take them out of the world, but that You keep
them from the evil one. 16 They are not of the world, just as I am not of the
world. 17 Sanctify them by the truth; Your word is truth. 18 As You sent Me into
the world, I have also sent them into the world. 19 For them I sanctify Myself,
so that they too may be sanctified by the truth.

Prayer for All Believers

20 I am not asking on behalf of them alone, but also on behalf of those who
will believe in Me through their message, 21 that all of them may be one, as
You, Father, are in Me, and I am in You. May they also be in Us, so that the
world may believe that You sent Me.

22 I have given them the glory You gave Me, so that they may be one as We
are one— 23 I in them and You in Me—that they may be perfectly united, so
that the world may know that You sent Me and have loved them just as You
have loved Me.

24 Father, I want those You have given Me to be with Me where I am, that they
may see the glory You gave Me because You loved Me before the foundation
of the world.

25 Righteous Father, although the world has not known You, I know You, and
they know that You sent Me. 26 And I have made Your name known to them

and will continue to make it known, so that the love You have for Me may be in them, and I in them.”

The Arrest and Trial of Jesus Christ

Introduction:

As part of His last journey to Jerusalem, following His triumphant entry into the city, Jesus faces opposition by priests, Pharisees, Sadducees and Scribes, leading to His arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane and facing several trials initiated by the Jewish leaders, then standing trial before the Roman governor, Pilate, culminating in His crucifixion outside the walls of Jerusalem. (1)

While all four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) record several events of Jesus' arrest and trial, with different and also unique details, the Gospel of John is under scrutiny here, since it is here that we can see the sovereignty of God well-expressed, i.e. better understand that these events are not things that just happened to Jesus, but that Jesus *allowed* them to happen as part of God's foreordained plan to suffer and die for the sins of all believers, only to rise again as victor over death. (2)

The following is an exploration of the events preceding Christ's crucifixion, and are separated into five parts: First, the betrayal and arrest of Jesus, second, the hearing before Annas (ex-high priest), third, the hearing before Caiaphas (son-in-law of Annas, and active high priest at the time), fourth, Christ's first appearance before Pontius Pilate (Roman governor at the time) (3) and, fifth, the second and last appearance before Pilate. (4)

The Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus

After Jesus had spoken these words, He went out with His disciples across the Kidron Valley, where they entered a garden. Now Judas His betrayer also knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with His disciples. So Judas brought a band of soldiers and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees. They arrived at the garden carrying lanterns, torches, and weapons. Jesus, knowing all that was coming upon Him, stepped forward and asked them, ***"Whom are you seeking?"*** "Jesus of Nazareth," they answered. Jesus said, ***"I am He."*** And Judas His betrayer was standing there with them. When Jesus said, "I am He," they drew back and fell to the ground. So He asked them again, ***"Whom are you seeking?"*** "Jesus of Nazareth," they answered. ***"I told you that I am He,"*** Jesus replied. ***"So if you are looking for Me, let these men go."*** This was to fulfill the word He had spoken: *"I have not lost one of those You have given Me."* Then Simon Peter drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus. ***"Put your sword back in its sheath!"*** Jesus said to Peter. ***"Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given Me?"*** Then the band of soldiers, with its commander and the officers of the Jews, arrested Jesus and bound Him. They brought Him first to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it would be better if one man died for the people.

John 18:1–14 (BSB)

Commentary:

Following His triumphant entry, the Last Supper and His struggle in the garden of Gethsemane, we see here the coming to pass of the predictions Jesus makes about His 'passion' (His suffering and death) and about His resurrection - notably, the Sanhedrin had already plotted to set out to kill Jesus (secretly) on their own initiative (Mark 14:1-2; Matthew 26:1-5; Luke 22:1-2; John 11:45-57) and Judas Iscariot had already agreed to betray Jesus outside of the religious festivities at the time (Mark 14:10-11; Matthew 26: 14-16; Luke 22:3-6). (5)

In this passage, we encounter Jesus as He faces His betrayal and arrest in the garden of Gethsemane (v.1-2). Gethsemane is derived from the Hebrew meaning 'oil press,' located on the western parts of Olivet, providing a view of the Kidron ravine and the Jerusalem temple. (6) The arrival of Judas (one of Jesus' twelve disciples) with Jewish and possibly Roman authorities with weapons indicates their fear of resistance by our Lord's disciples (v.3). (7)

In v.4 we learn that Jesus already knows what is about to happen, and in v.5-6 we see Jesus taking the initiative, as well as revealing His divinity in His response "I am He" (egō eimi) recalling God's divine name (Exodus 3:14;

John 8:58) - hereby, initiating a theophany (God's appearance producing fear and awe in human beings) - causing His assailants to fall back to the ground. (8)

In v.7-9 we see here that Jesus is in control and insists that His men be let go, thereby fulfilling prophecy along the way (v.9). Peter, trying to defend Jesus on his own accord, cuts off a high priestly servant's ear (v.10) - whom Jesus heals (a detail recorded only in Luke 22:51) - rebuking Peter for his action, and thereby demonstrating His sovereign authority, along with Christ's own immediate purpose coming to fruition. (9) Jesus then lets Himself be arrested, taken away to the high priest Annas, while His disciples flee (Mark 14:50-51; Matthew 26:56), but Peter - along with an unnamed disciple - follows Jesus (John 18:15).

Examination By High Priest (Annas)

Meanwhile, the high priest questioned Jesus about His disciples and His teaching. ***"I have spoken openly to the world,"*** Jesus answered. ***"I always taught in the synagogues and at the temple, where all the Jews come together. I said nothing in secret. Why are you asking Me? Ask those who heard My message. Surely they know what I said."*** When Jesus had said this, one of the officers standing nearby slapped Him in the face and said, "Is this how You answer the high priest?" Jesus replied, ***"If I said something wrong, testify as to what was wrong. But if I spoke correctly, why did you strike Me?"***
John 18:19–23 (BSB)

Commentary:

In this passage (recorded only in John's Gospel) we see that even though Jesus is truthfully responding to their questions (v.19-21) He is unjustly attacked physically (v.22) which sets up the remainder of His time on earth as part of His passion. The preliminary hearing here is significant in that even though Annas had been deposed by the Romans, he was still viewed by the Jewish leaders as high priest (an office held for life) - and it can be inferred that Jesus is requesting a legal hearing with the active high priest. (10)

Hearing Before Caiaphas (Active High Priest) And The Sanhedrin

Then Annas sent Him, still bound, to Caiaphas the high priest.
John 18:24 (BSB)

They led Jesus away to the high priest, and all the chief priests, elders, and scribes assembled. Peter followed Him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. And he sat with the officers and warmed himself by the fire. Now the chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were seeking testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but they did not find any. For many bore false witness against Jesus, but their testimony was inconsistent. Then some men stood up and testified falsely against Him: “We heard Him say, ‘I will destroy this man-made temple, and in three days I will build another that is made without hands.’ ” But even their testimony was inconsistent. So the high priest stood up before them and questioned Jesus, “Have You no answer? What are these men testifying against You?” But Jesus remained silent and made no reply. Again the high priest questioned Him, “Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?” ***“I am,”*** said Jesus, ***“and you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power and coming with the clouds of heaven.”*** At this, the high priest tore his clothes and declared, “Why do we need any more witnesses? You have heard the blasphemy. What is your verdict?” And they all condemned Him as deserving of death. Then some of them began to spit on Him. They blindfolded Him, struck Him with their fists, and said to Him, “Prophesy!” And the officers received Him with slaps in His face.
Mark 14:53–65 (BSB)

Commentary:

While John does not record the details of Jesus’ being before the Sanhedrin led by Caiaphas the active high priest, we have several records in Mark 14:53-65 (see Bible passage above), in Matthew 26:57-68 and in Luke 22:66-71). Taken together we find unique details about this event, which are not contradictory, but rather complementary. As we also see here in v.2, Peter had followed Jesus into the high priestly courtyard, pre-empting his threefold denial of Jesus.

It becomes clear here, that as Jesus is standing before His accusers, there is no legal basis to charge Jesus with the death penalty, despite false witnesses and false accusations (v.55-60). Even though Jesus remains silent before these charges, He does answer truthfully to the high priest's question "Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?" (v.61), prompting Him to reply "I am" and alluding to the Old Testament (Daniel 7:13 and Psalm 110:1):

> ***"I am,"*** said Jesus, ***"and you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power and coming with the clouds of heaven."***
>
> Mark 14:62 (BSB)

This leads the religious leaders to condemn Jesus for apparent blasphemy (v.65-64) as well as further physical assault (v.65). Notably, recorded only in Matthew (Matthew 27:1-10) we learn about Judas remorse and suicide, yet instead of turning back to Jesus, Judas turns to Christ's enemies, in effect, a refusal to surrender to Christ. (12) Significantly, these actions by Judas and the religious leaders fulfill additional prophecies from the Old Testament (Jeremiah 19:1-13; Zechariah 11:11-13).

Jesus' Two Appearances Before Pilate - The First Appearance

Then they led Jesus away from Caiaphas into the Praetorium. By now it was early morning, and the Jews did not enter the Praetorium, to avoid being defiled and unable to eat the Passover. So Pilate went out to them and asked, "What accusation are you bringing against this man?" "If He were not a criminal," they replied, "we would not have handed Him over to you." "You take Him and judge Him by your own law," Pilate told them. "We are not permitted to execute anyone," the Jews replied. This was to fulfill the word that Jesus had spoken to indicate the kind of death He was going to die. Pilate went back into the Praetorium, summoned Jesus, and asked Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?" ***"Are you saying this on your own,"*** Jesus asked, ***"or did others tell you about Me?"*** "Am I a Jew?" Pilate replied. "Your own people and chief priests handed You over to me. What have You done?" Jesus answered, ***"My kingdom is not of this world; if it were, My servants would fight to prevent My arrest by the Jews. But now My kingdom is not of this realm."*** "Then You are a king!" Pilate said. ***"You say that I am a king,"*** Jesus answered. ***"For this reason I was born and***

have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to My voice." "What is truth?" Pilate asked. And having said this, he went out again to the Jews and told them, "I find no basis for a charge against Him."
John 18:28–38 (BSB)

Commentary:

In His first appearance before Pilate at the Roman governor's palace ('Praetorium') the Jewish religious leaders - since they do not have authority over the death penalty (only the Romans held this authority at the time) - accuse Jesus of treason, and even though Pilate sees Jesus' innocence and sees through the envious motives of His accusers (Mark 15:10) he does not set Jesus free. (13) What matters most here is that we see how Jesus is in control, since He interrogates Pilate (v.34), testifies to God's divine Kingdom (v.36) and to truth itself: "Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice," (v.37) to which Pilate responds "what is truth?" (v.38) not knowing that the Messiah is standing right in front of him. (14) Pilate then announces that he finds no basis for a charge against Jesus (v.38). As we learn in Luke (Luke 23:6-12) Pilate sends Jesus to Herod, since Jesus is from Galilee, a region under Herod's jurisdiction, yet Jesus stays silent before Herod, who sends Jesus back to Pilate. (15)

Jesus' Two Appearances Before Pilate - The Second Appearance

But it is your custom that I release to you one prisoner at the Passover. So then, do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?" "Not this man," they shouted, "but Barabbas!" (Now Barabbas was an insurrectionist.) Then Pilate took Jesus and had Him flogged. The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns, set it on His head, and dressed Him in a purple robe. And they went up to Him again and again, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and slapping Him in the face. Once again Pilate came out and said to the Jews, "Look, I am bringing Him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against Him." When Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!" As soon as the chief priests and officers saw Him, they shouted, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" "You take Him and crucify Him," Pilate replied, "for I find no basis for a charge against Him." "We have a law," answered the Jews, "and according to that law He must die, because He declared Himself to be the Son of God." When Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid, and he went back into

the Praetorium. “Where are You from?” he asked. But Jesus gave no answer. So Pilate said to Him, “Do You refuse to speak to me? Do You not know that I have authority to release You and authority to crucify You?” Jesus answered, ***“You would have no authority over Me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed Me over to you is guilty of greater sin.”*** From then on, Pilate tried to release Him, but the Jews kept shouting, “If you release this man, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who declares himself a king is defying Caesar.” When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out and sat on the judgment seat at a place called the Stone Pavement, which in Hebrew is Gabbatha. It was the day of Preparation for the Passover, about the sixth hour. And Pilate said to the Jews, “Here is your King!” At this, they shouted, “Away with Him! Away with Him! Crucify Him!” “Shall I crucify your King?” Pilate asked. “We have no king but Caesar,” replied the chief priests. Then Pilate handed Jesus over to be crucified, and the soldiers took Him away.

John 18:39–19:16 (BSB)

Commentary:

In this segment we learn that Pilate is initially unwilling to condemn Jesus, since he recognizes Jesus as being innocent, but does not want to deal with a Jewish uprising, finally giving in to the crowd that is shouting “Crucify him!” (16) The mentioning of Barabbas, an insurrectionist and murderer (John 18:40 and Mark 15:7) and Pilate releasing him, instead of Jesus is a manifestation of great injustice - Pilate then has Jesus flogged in a attempt of trying to release Him (v.19:1-6) which also fails. (17)

Having also been warned by his wife about Jesus being innocent (Matthew 27:19) Pilate is fearful (John 19:8) of his own authority being compromised, and yet, even after Jesus declares:

> Jesus answered, ***“You would have no authority over Me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed Me over to you is guilty of greater sin.”***
>
> John 19:11 (BSB)

At this point, he desperately tries to release Jesus (v.12). Nevertheless, Pilate’s fear of failure before Caesar (the Roman emperor) as a result of a riot, leads him to give in to the shouting mob and decides to have Jesus crucified (v.16). (18)

Conclusion:

To sum up, as we have seen, from a solely human perspective, the arrest and trial appear to be arbitrary. In fact, the Jewish religious leaders had already decided to plot against Jesus even before His triumphant entry into Jerusalem. However, as we see in the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus lets Himself be arrested, in order to fulfill God's divine plan of salvation for all believers. (19)

At His first examination before Annas the high priest, Jesus essentially rebukes him for the secrecy of the trial (John 18:20-21) - Jesus remains bold and steadfast speaking the truth, even in the face of evil. (20) Then at the hearing before Caiaphas and the trial before the Sanhedrin, despite false witnesses testifying against Jesus, Jesus Himself truthfully affirms that He is the Messiah, leading the Jewish religious leaders to falsely accuse Jesus of blasphemy. (21) Nevertheless, as they miss the "Son of Man" having been prophesied about in Daniel 7:13-14, Jesus does not miss out on witnessing to them about Himself, as He is closer to God the Father than anyone else, announcing His Second Coming. (22)

Having been declared 'guilty of a crime deserving the death penalty,' the two appearances before Pilate, are a continuation of the hypocrisy exhibited by the Jewish leaders, to the extent that they exalt the pagan Roman Emperor (Caesar) above God's own Messiah, Jesus. Despite recognizing Jesus not being guilty, Pilate decides to crucify an innocent man, giving in to the demands and shouts of the Sanhedrin and allows the crucifixion of Christ.

What remains is the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophesies, Jesus' own prophesies about Himself (being raised from the dead), and prophesies fulfilled unrelated to any activity on Jesus' part (such as Judas' suicide and the Sanhedrin's reaction). The authority of Jesus and His eternal kingdom stands firm (25) and we see God's sovereign will is done (26).

Appendix A

(The Arrest and Trial of Jesus Christ - Suggested Sequence of Events)

	Matthew	**Mark**	**Luke**	**John**
Jesus is betrayed and arrested, the disciples flee.	26:47-56	14:43-52	22:47-53	18:2-12
Jesus is examined by Annas.	***	***	***	18:13-14; 19-23
Jesus is tried by Caiaphas and Sanhedrin.	26:57, 59-68	14:53, 55-65	22:54, 63-65	18:24
Peter denies Jesus three times.	26:58, 69-75	14:54, 66-72	22:54-62	18:15-18, 25-27

Jesus is condemned by the Sanhedrin.	27:1	15:1	22:66-71	***
Judas commits suicide.	27:3-10	***	***	***
Jesus appears before Pilate for first time.	27:2, 11-14	15:1-5	23:1-6	18:28-38
Jesus appears before Herod	***	***	23:7-12	***
Jesus appears before Pilate for the second time and is condemned (even though Pilate declares Him not guilty)!	27:15-26	15:6-15	23:13-25	18:39-19:16

Notes

(1) *Nelson's Complete Book Of Bible Maps And Charts*, 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010., p.311-313.
(2) *Nelson's Complete Book Of Bible Maps And Charts*, 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010., p.311.
(3) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.318.
(4) See Appendix A for a suggested sequence of events, adapted from Carson, D. A. ed. *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015., 1949, 2021., p.2205-2206.
(5) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.176.

(6) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009., p.393.
(7) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009., p.394.
(8) Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020., p.388.
(9) Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020., p.388.
(10) Carson, D. A. ed. *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015., 1949, 2021., p.2055.
(11) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009., p.396-397.
(12) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009., p.398.
(13) Carson, D. A. ed. *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015., 1949, 2021., p.2055.
(14) Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020., p.389.
(15) Carson, D. A. ed. *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015., 1949, 2021., p.2055.
(16) Carson, D. A. ed. *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015., 1949, 2021., p.2055.
(17) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.278.
(18) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009., p.401.
(19) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.318.
(20) Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020., p.389.
(21) Carson, D. A. ed. *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015., 1949, 2021., p.2055.
(22) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009., p.397.
(23) Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020., p.389.
(24) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.278.
(25) Carson, D. A. *The Gospel According to John. Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991., p.587.
(26) Stein, Robert H. *Luke*. The New American Commentary: Volume 24. Nashville, TN: B&H, 1992., p.563.

Bibliography

Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009.

Carson, D. A. ed. *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015.

Carson, D. A. *The Gospel According to John. Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991.

Stein, Robert H. *Luke*. The New American Commentary: Volume 24. Nashville, TN: B&H, 1992.

Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012.

Nelson's Complete Book Of Bible Maps And Charts, 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010.

Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020.

The Crucifixion, Death and Burial of Jesus Christ

When Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, ***"It is finished."*** And bowing His head, He yielded up His spirit.
John 19:30 (BSB)

Introduction:

Following His triumphal entry, His arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane, several religious and civil trials, Jesus Christ accomplishes His divine mission at His crucifixion, death and burial outside the city walls of Jerusalem, prior to His resurrection and ascension. (1) As recorded in all four Gospels (Matthew 27:27-66; Mark 15:16-47; Luke 23:26-56 and John 19:16-42) these events center on Jesus' being put to death by crucifixion by the Romans. (2)

Crucifixion, as practiced by Phoenicians, Egyptians and then by the Romans is among the most cruel forms of death known to mankind; While Roman citizens at the time were mainly exempt from this kind of execution, since it was recognized as shameful, it was mainly applied only to the worst slaves and criminals in antiquity. (3) Notably, the crucifixion of Jesus is also recorded by non-Christian writers, such as Josephus and Tacitus, providing extrabiblical records to the factuality of the event. (4)

Nevertheless, the time of Jesus' death (at Passover) provides a glimpse into the prophetic and sacrificial nature of the biblical account, pointing to the unique work of Jesus Christ as fulfilling the Passover sacrifice (Luke 22:15), mentioned by John the Baptist (John 1:29) and especially by the Apostle Paul: "For Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed" (1 Corinthians 5:7). (5) The Scripture of Jesus' finished work on the cross, (see opening verse above), its magnitude and theological implications are at the heart of this article. As such, the following investigates these events in a threefold manner - following the events as recorded in the Gospel of Matthew (Matthew 27:27-66) - first, the crucifixion of Jesus; second, the death of Jesus Christ; and third, the burial of Jesus Christ.

The Crucifixion of Jesus Christ

Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company around Him. They stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him. And they twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on His head. They put a staff in His right hand and knelt down before Him to mock Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" Then they spit on Him and took the staff and struck Him on the head repeatedly.
Matthew 27:27–30 (BSB)

Commentary:

Leading up to the crucifixion of Jesus, we learn more about the preceding events as recorded here in Matthew (also in Mark 15:16-19) in which - subsequent to Pontius Pilate ordering the execution of Jesus - the Roman soldiers mocking Him. Having been already scourged (Matthew 27:26; Mark 15:15; John 19:1) an act that often causes death, due to its severity (6) Jesus suffers further indignities as He is mocked in the Praetorium (the palace of the Roman governor) (v.28-30) being robed, crowned with thorns, putting a staff in His right hand; mocking Him saying "Hail, King of the Jews," (7) along with physical assault (v.30). After this they lead Him away for crucifixion (v.31).

Along the way they found a man from Cyrene, named Simon, and they forced
him to carry the cross of Jesus. And when they came to a place called
Golgotha, which means The Place of the Skull, they offered Him wine to
drink, mixed with gall; but after tasting it, He refused to drink it. When they
had crucified Him, they divided up His garments by casting lots. And sitting
down, they kept watch over Him there. Above His head they posted the
written charge against Him: THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Two
robbers were crucified with Him, one on His right hand and the other on His
left. And those who passed by heaped abuse on Him, shaking their heads
and saying, "You who are going to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three
days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross!" In
the same way, the chief priests, scribes, and elders mocked Him, saying, "He
saved others, but He cannot save Himself. He is the King of Israel! Let Him
come down now from the cross, and we will believe in Him. He trusts in God.
Let God deliver Him now if He wants Him. For He said, 'I am the Son of
God.' " In the same way, even the robbers who were crucified with Him
berated Him.
Matthew 27:32–44 (BSB)

Commentary:

This segment provides further insight into the crucifixion of Jesus Christ (which is also recorded in the other Gospels). (8) As He struggles along the way - on what is today thought of as the *Via Dolorosa* ("Sorrowful Way") - Jesus is so weak from the prior physical abuse, unable to carry His cross at this point, that the soldiers force a man named Simon of Cyrene to carry Jesus' cross (also in Mark 15:20-21; Luke 23:26, but not mentioned in John), as Jesus is still able to warn a group of bewailing women about God's

judgment on Jerusalem (only recorded in Luke 23:27-31). (9) Having reached the place of His crucifixion (v.33) outside the city of Jerusalem, we learn that the place is called “Golgotha” in Aramaic, Latin: Calvary. (10)

In v.35 Jesus is crucified by the Roman soldiers who are overseeing the execution and cast lots as they are dividing up His garments. The Gospel of John provides more details on the reason for this casting of lots (John 19:23-24) along with explaining the Scripture of it, since Old Testament prophetic Scripture is fulfilled here (Psalm 22:18) emphasizing the sovereignty of God’s purpose in the event. (11) The sign placed above Christ’s head (v.37), presenting the charge against Him reads:

> Above His head they posted the written charge against Him:
> THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS.
> Matthew 27:37 (BSB)

What is significant here is that, even though the Jewish leaders protest to Pilate about the sign written in Hebrew, Latin and Greek (as recorded only in John 19:19-22) to no avail, Pilate, unbeknownst to him, becomes an instrument of God’s sovereign will being accomplished, since Jesus’ own prophetic fulfillment (“I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw everyone to Myself” in John 12:32) is accomplished here, since Jesus (as we witness in His resurrection later) is the true King of *both*: Jews and Gentiles. (12)

In v.38 the two men crucified with Jesus are referred to as *lēstai* (that is ‘revolutionary bandits’) or simply, “robbers.” (13) As the first three hours of Jesus’ suffering on the cross continue, He is also mocked and insulted by passersby (v.39-40), chief priests, scribes and elders (v.41-43), as well as the two robbers (v.44). However, one of the robbers has a change of heart (recorded only in Luke 23:39-43) and Jesus extends His divine forgiveness to the repentant man. (14) Likewise, as recorded only in Luke 23:34, Jesus extends His forgiveness as He prays for those who are acting out of ignorance, emphasizing His boundless mercy and grace towards sinners, in contrast to the sneering, mockery and blaspheming of the passersby and Jewish leaders. (15)

From the sixth hour until the ninth hour darkness came over all the land. About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, ***“Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?”*** which means, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” When some of those standing there heard this, they said, “He is calling Elijah.” One of them quickly ran and brought a sponge. He filled it with sour wine, put it on a reed, and held it up for Jesus to drink. But the others said, “Leave Him alone. Let us see if Elijah comes to save Him.” When Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, He yielded up His spirit.
Matthew 27:45–50 (BSB)

Commentary:

As we read here about the last three hours of Jesus’ suffering before His death, we learn about darkness falling in the early afternoon, which Luke records as the sun ceasing to shine for this period (Luke 23:45) an unexplained incident. (16) It is at this point, close to His death that Jesus is crying out to God the Father, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” which leads some bystanders to conclude, Jesus is calling for the Old Testament prophet Elijah to save Him (v.46-49). (17)

When Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, He yielded up His spirit.
Matthew 27:50 (BSB)

Before Jesus dies, there are other incidents that take place, not recorded in Matthew, but in the other Gospels. For example, John’s Gospel records Jesus’ interaction with His mother, and “the disciple whom He loved” (John 19:25-27) as well as more details in His words, just before His death (John 19:28-30).

Here, it is helpful to consider Jesus’ seven last words, in a probable order of utterance: One, “Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34) shows Jesus’ love for enemies, even as they are killing Him, providing an opportunity for repentance. Two, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with Me in Paradise” (Luke 23:43) which is Jesus’ promise to the repentant thief, and all of us believers, that at our death we will be immediately “absent from the body, present with the Lord” (2 Corinthians 5:8). Three, “Woman, here is your son” and “Here is your mother” (John 19:26-27) reveals Jesus’ concern for His next of kin. Four, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” best to be interpreted literally, revealing Jesus’ sense of divine abandonment as human being, while His divine nature remains, showing that God is paying the price for us fallen sinners Himself.

Five, “I am thirsty” (John 19:28) shows us Jesus has accomplished His mission, and is fulfilling Old Testament Scripture at the same time. Six, “It is finished” (John 19:30) indicates the spiritual truth, that even while His earthly life is over, His atoning sacrifice and death for the sins of all Christians is accomplished. Seven, “Father, into your hands I commit My Spirit” (Luke 23:46) echoes Psalm 31:5, which reveals Christ’s trust and surrender to God the Father, even in the seeming absence of the Father. (18) As Jesus accomplishes salvation, and releases His Spirit (John 19:30) we realize that even here, no one takes Christ’s life, since He willingly surrenders it (John 10:11, 15, 17-18; 15:13). (19) Scripture has been fulfilled.

At that moment the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth quaked and the rocks were split. The tombs broke open, and the bodies of many saints who had fallen asleep were raised. After Jesus’ resurrection, when they had come out of the tombs, they entered the holy city and appeared to many people. When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified and said, “Truly this was the Son of God.” And many women were there, watching from a distance. They had followed Jesus from Galilee to minister to Him. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee’s sons.
Matthew 27:51–56 (BSB)

Commentary:

Going back to Matthew, we learn about the temple curtain being torn in two from top to bottom and an earthquake occurring (v.51). The curtain at the Jerusalem temple was 60 feet by 30 feet and about 5 inches thick, so here something supernatural is taking place. (20) The opening of the tombs and the raising of the saints after Jesus’ resurrection (v.52-53) is something of a mystery, and yet these events are an encouragement for Christians to endure persecution, even to the point of death, since like Jesus all of us believers will be raised (see Ezekiel 37:7, 12-13; Daniel 12:2). (21) While there is mystery here, and the supernatural prevails, the Bible assures us that the general resurrection has been initiated, a new age has dawned (1 Corinthians 15:20). (22)

In addition, the centurion’s testimony, “truly this was the Son of God” (v.54) is astonishing, since He is a Gentile. (23) While many onlookers depart from the scene disappointed (Luke 23:48), others remain at the scene, notably, many women (Matthew 27:55-56), who will be important eyewitnesses later on.

It was the day of Preparation, and the next day was a High Sabbath. In order that the bodies would not remain on the cross during the Sabbath, the Jews asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies removed. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and those of the other. But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water flowed out. The one who saw it has testified to this, and his testimony is true. He knows that he is telling the truth, so that you also may believe. Now these things happened so that the Scripture would be fulfilled: “Not one of His bones will be broken.” And, as another Scripture says: “They will look on the One they have pierced.”

John 19:31–37 (BSB)

Commentary:

In this astonishing segment (recorded only in John), we are still following along the events taking place as Jesus is already dead. Here (v.31-32), we see the hypocrisy of the Jewish authorities, who are only concerned about not spiritually polluting the “High Sabbath” and therefore ask Pilate to have the legs of the crucified men broken to hasten death, and remove the bodies, because in the Old Testament, Deuteronomy 21:22-23 prohibited that executed criminals should remain on a tree overnight. (24)

The breaking of the legs (‘crurifragium’) is applied by the soldiers to both men on either side of Jesus, but no to Jesus, since they realize He is already dead (v.33). (25) In v.34 we read that a soldier pierces the side of Jesus with a spear, causing blood and water to flow out. The suddenness (“immediately” in v.34) confirms that Jesus is fully human and is dead at this moment. (26)

What is important here, is that along with Old Testament prophecy being fulfilled (Psalm 34:20; Zechariah 12:10-14) the combined facts of the soldiers discovering Jesus to be dead (v.33), water and blood coming out of His side (v.34), the Apostle John’s testimony (v.35) and the subsequent burial ritual (John 19:40-42) serve as confirmation that Jesus is truly dead, in preparation for the miracle of Christ’s resurrection. (27)

When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea named Joseph, who himself was a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate to ask for the body of Jesus, and Pilate ordered that it be given to him. So Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut into the rock. Then he rolled a great stone across the entrance to the tomb and went away.
Matthew 27:57–60 (BSB)

Commentary:

As we continue to follow the events as recorded in Matthew, we gain additional insight of Jesus' burial. At this point, we learn about Joseph of Arimathea, a wealthy man and a disciple of Jesus, as well as a "prominent member of the Jewish religious council" (Mark 15:43) who courageously goes to Pilate to ask for Jesus' body, which is granted him (v.57-58) - notably, only the Gospel of John tells us that Joseph was aided by the Pharisee Nicodemus in the burial procedure (John 19:38-42). (28)

Combining the records of John's Gospel, with what we read about here (v.59-60) we realize the kindness, piety and act of love towards Jesus, as Joseph (and Nicodemus) wrap Jesus in "clean linen cloth" (v.59), placing the body in Joseph's "own new tomb" rolling a "great stone" (v.60) in front of it. (29) As this happens, additional Old Testament prophecy is fulfilled (Isaiah 53:9). Additionally, the witness of two women looking on, confirms the exact location of the tomb (v.61).

The next day, the one after Preparation Day, the chief priests and Pharisees assembled before Pilate. "Sir," they said, "we remember that while He was alive that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise again.' So give the order that the tomb be secured until the third day. Otherwise, His disciples may come and steal Him away and tell the people He has risen from the dead. And this last deception would be worse than the first." "You have a guard," Pilate said. "Go, make the tomb as secure as you know how." So they went and secured the tomb by sealing the stone and posting the guard.
Matthew 27:62–66 (BSB)

Commentary:

Recorded only in Matthew, we learn about the Jewish leaders coming to Pilate requesting guards to be placed at Jesus' tomb, to prevent His disciples from stealing Christ's body and then deceptively claiming Christ had risen from the dead (v.62-66). Pilate complies with their request, telling the chief priests and Pharisees to "make the tomb as secure as you know how" (v.65) and the tomb is sealed and a guard posted (v.66).

As Jesus does rise from the dead as He said He would, leaving the tomb empty, the same people here later on attempt to use the story of a stolen body, to explain the apparent cover up (Matthew 28:11-15), a plan that backfires, since this action as recorded in v.62-66, 'seals the deal' on the forthcoming false story of the stolen body. (30)

At this point, it is helpful to consider some of the prophecies that have been fulfilled, surrounding the crucifixion, death and burial of Jesus Christ. Following the events, as recorded in the Gospel of John, we gain a better understanding of Jesus as the 'suffering servant' and the sinless 'Lamb of God' who becomes the ultimate sacrifice for all believers (31):

New Testament	Old Testament
John 19:24	Psalm 22:18
John 19:28	Psalm 22:15
John 19:29-30	Exodus 12:22
John 19:30	Isaiah 53:12
John 19:31	Deuteronomy 21:22-23
John 19:34-35	Ezekiel 36:26-27/ Zechariah 12:10
John 19:36	Exodus 12:46

Furthermore, there are many parts of Jesus' death that can be seen as fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies (32):

	New Testament	Old Testament
Jesus' obedience to God the Father	John 18:11	Psalm 40:8
Jesus announces His own death	John 18:32	Numbers 21:8, 9
Jesus dies in the place of His kinsmen	John 18:14	Isaiah 53:4-6
Jesus dies with evildoers	John 19:18	Isaiah 53:12
Jesus dies innocently	John 19:6	Isaiah 53:9
Jesus is crucified	John 19:18	Psalm 22:16
Jesus is buried in the tomb of a rich man	John 19:38-42	Isaiah 53:9

Conclusion:

The crucifixion, death and burial of Jesus Christ stand out in many different ways. First, as seen, the death of Christ on the cross is sacrificial, which means that as Savior ('Messiah'), Jesus reconciled all who will ever believe in Him to Himself (verified by His resurrection following these events) a viewpoint that especially informed the theology of the Apostle Paul (1 Corinthians 1:17; Ephesians 2:16; Galatians 2:20; Galatians 3:13) who converted from strict Judaism to Christianity. (33)

Also, the events surrounding Christ's work on the cross, are beyond being merely incidental, such as the inscription Pontius Pilate (the Roman governor at the time) places above Jesus on the cross (John 19:19-20) in Hebrew (likely Aramaic), Latin and Greek pointing to the universality of Jesus' atonement on the cross, removing the sin of all believers (Jews and Gentiles alike). (34)

Likewise, Christ's death is not just something that happened to Him, but the Gospel accounts indicate He died at His own chosen time in a voluntary way. (35) Jesus' work on the cross, along with the supernatural events (such as darkness falling and an earthquake, the Temple curtain torn and tombs opened) reveals Christ's victory over the cosmic powers of darkness and evil. (36) Significantly, Jesus' work on the cross is the ultimate victory over Satan (the devil) and death, since in taking upon Himself God's penalty of death, He has broken the stronghold Satan has over unbelievers - certified by the resurrection of Christ by God the Father on the third day, following the crucifixion. (37)

Finally, the amount and variety of Old Testament prophecies fulfilled before, during and after Christ's death, are remarkable and theologically significant, as we are reminded of the Old Testament Passover Lamb with

unbroken bones (John 19:36; Exodus 12:46) among many others. (38) Having accomplished His God-given work of salvation, Jesus lays down His life on His own initiative, calling all who will ever believe in Him as God-incarnate and His subsequent resurrection, to be part of Him and His eternal Kingdom. (39)

Appendix A

(More details in suggested sequence)

Event	Location	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Jesus is mocked by Roman soldiers	Jerusalem	27:27-30	15:16-19	***	***
Jesus is led to Golgotha	Jerusalem	27:31-34	15:20-23	23:26-32	19:16-17
Jesus on the cross (events of first 3 hours)	Golgotha	27:35-44	15:24-32	23:33-43	19:18-27
Jesus on the cross (events of last 3 hours)	Golgotha	27:45-50	15:33-37	23:44, 46	19:28-30
Events surrounding the death of Jesus	***	27:51-56	15:38-41	23:45, 47-49	***
The burial of Jesus	Jerusalem	27:57-61	15:42-46	23:50-54	19:31-42
The sealing of the tomb	Jerusalem	27:62-66	***	***	***
The women watch	Jerusalem	***	15:47	23:55-56	***

Appendix B
(Bible Passages)

The Soldiers Mock Jesus

(Isaiah 50:4–11; Mark 15:16–20; Luke 22:63–65; John 19:1–15)

27 Then the governor’s soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered
the whole company around Him. 28 They stripped Him and put a scarlet robe
on Him. 29 And they twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on His head.
They put a staff in His right hand and knelt down before Him to mock Him,
saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” 30 Then they spit on Him and took the staff
and struck Him on the head repeatedly.

31 After they had mocked Him, they removed the robe and put His own
clothes back on Him. Then they led Him away to crucify Him.

Matthew 27:32–66 (BSB)

The Crucifixion

(Psalms 22:1–31; Mark 15:21–32; Luke 23:26–43; John 19:16–27)

32 Along the way they found a man from Cyrene, named Simon, and they
forced him to carry the cross of Jesus.

33And when they came to a place called Golgotha, which means The Place of
the Skull, 34they offered Him wine to drink, mixed with gall; but after tasting
it, He refused to drink it.

35When they had crucified Him, they divided up His garments by casting lots.
36And sitting down, they kept watch over Him there.

37Above His head they posted the written charge against Him:

THIS IS JESUS,
THE KING OF THE JEWS.

38Two robbers were crucified with Him, one on His right hand and the other
on His left.

39And those who passed by heaped abuse on Him, shaking their heads 40and
saying, “You who are going to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days,
save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross!”

41In the same way, the chief priests, scribes, and elders mocked Him, saying,
42“He saved others, but He cannot save Himself. He is the King of Israel! Let
Him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in Him. 43He trusts in
God. Let God deliver Him now if He wants Him. For He said, ‘I am the Son of
God.’ ”

44In the same way, even the robbers who were crucified with Him berated
Him.

The Death of Jesus

(Psalms 22:1–31; Mark 15:33–41; Luke 23:44–49; John 19:28–30)

45From the sixth hour until the ninth hour darkness came over all the land.
46About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lema
sabachthani?” which means, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

47When some of those standing there heard this, they said, “He is calling
Elijah.” 48One of them quickly ran and brought a sponge. He filled it with sour
wine, put it on a reed, and held it up for Jesus to drink.

49But the others said, “Leave Him alone. Let us see if Elijah comes to save
Him.”

50When Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, He yielded up His spirit.
51At that moment the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.
The earth quaked and the rocks were split. 52The tombs broke open, and the
bodies of many saints who had fallen asleep were raised. 53After Jesus’
resurrection, when they had come out of the tombs, they entered the holy
city and appeared to many people.

54When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified and said, “Truly this was the Son of God.”

55And many women were there, watching from a distance. They had followed Jesus from Galilee to minister to Him. 56Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee’s sons.

The Burial of Jesus

(Isaiah 53:9–12; Mark 15:42–47; Luke 23:50–56; John 19:38–42)

57When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea named Joseph, who himself was a disciple of Jesus. 58He went to Pilate to ask for the body of Jesus, and Pilate ordered that it be given to him. 59So Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, 60and placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut into the rock. Then he rolled a great stone across the entrance to the tomb and went away. 61Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting there opposite the tomb.

The Guards at the Tomb

62The next day, the one after Preparation Day, the chief priests and Pharisees assembled before Pilate. 63“Sir,” they said, “we remember that while He was alive that deceiver said, ‘After three days I will rise again.’ 64So give the order that the tomb be secured until the third day. Otherwise, His disciples may come and steal Him away and tell the people He has risen from the dead. And this last deception would be worse than the first.”

65“You have a guard,” Pilate said. “Go, make the tomb as secure as you know how.” 66So they went and secured the tomb by sealing the stone and posting the guard.

The Soldiers Mock Jesus

(Isaiah 50:4–11; Matthew 27:27–31; Luke 22:63–65; John 19:1–15)

16Then the soldiers led Jesus away into the palace (that is, the Praetorium) and called the whole company together. 17They dressed Him in a purple robe, twisted together a crown of thorns, and set it on His head. 18And they began to salute Him: “Hail, King of the Jews!”

19They kept striking His head with a staff and spitting on Him. And they knelt down and bowed before Him. 20After they had mocked Him, they removed the purple robe and put His own clothes back on Him. Then they led Him out to crucify Him.

Mark 15:21–47 (BSB)

The Crucifixion

(Psalms 22:1–31; Matthew 27:32–44; Luke 23:26–43; John 19:16–27)

21Now Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus, was passing by
on his way in from the country, and the soldiers forced him to carry the cross
of Jesus.

22They brought Jesus to a place called Golgotha, which means The Place of
the Skull. 23There they offered Him wine mixed with myrrh, but He did not
take it.

24And they crucified Him.

They also divided His garments by casting lots to decide what each of them
would take.

25It was the third hour when they crucified Him. 26And the charge inscribed
against Him read:

THE KING OF THE JEWS.

27Along with Jesus, they crucified two robbers, one on His right and one on
His left.

29And those who passed by heaped abuse on Him, shaking their heads and
saying, “Aha! You who are going to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three
days, 30come down from the cross and save Yourself!”

31In the same way, the chief priests and scribes mocked Him among
themselves, saying, “He saved others, but He cannot save Himself! 32Let the
Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross, so that we may see
and believe!” And even those who were crucified with Him berated Him.

The Death of Jesus

(Psalms 22:1–31; Matthew 27:45–56; Luke 23:44–49; John 19:28–30)

33From the sixth hour until the ninth hour darkness came over all the land.
34At the ninth hour, Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lema
sabachthani?” which means, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

35When some of those standing nearby heard this, they said, “Behold, He is
calling Elijah.”

36And someone ran and filled a sponge with sour wine. He put it on a reed
and held it up for Jesus to drink, saying, “Leave Him alone. Let us see if Elijah
comes to take Him down.”

37But Jesus let out a loud cry and breathed His last. 38And the veil of the
temple was torn in two from top to bottom.

39When the centurion standing there in front of Jesus saw how He had
breathed His last, he said, “Truly this man was the Son of God!”

40And there were also women watching from a distance. Among them were
Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and
Salome. 41These women had followed Jesus and ministered to Him while He
was in Galilee, and there were many other women who had come up to
Jerusalem with Him.

The Burial of Jesus

(Isaiah 53:9–12; Matthew 27:57–61; Luke 23:50–56; John 19:38–42)

42Now it was already evening. Since it was Preparation Day (that is, the day
before the Sabbath), 43Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent Council member
who himself was waiting for the kingdom of God, boldly went to Pilate to ask
for the body of Jesus.

44Pilate was surprised to hear that Jesus was already dead, so he summoned
the centurion to ask if this was so. 45When Pilate had confirmed it with the
centurion, he granted the body to Joseph.

46So Joseph bought a linen cloth, took down the body of Jesus, wrapped it in
the cloth, and placed it in a tomb that had been cut out of the rock. Then he
rolled a stone against the entrance to the tomb. 47Mary Magdalene and Mary
the mother of Joseph saw where His body was placed.

Luke 23:26–56 (BSB)

The Crucifixion

(Psalms 22:1–31; Matthew 27:32–44; Mark 15:21–32; John 19:16–27)

26As the soldiers led Him away, they seized Simon of Cyrene on his way in
from the country, and put the cross on him to carry behind Jesus.

27A great number of people followed Him, including women who kept
mourning and wailing for Him. 28But Jesus turned to them and said,
“Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and
for your children. 29Look, the days are coming when people will say, ‘Blessed
are the barren women, the wombs that never bore, and breasts that never
nursed!’ 30At that time

‘they will say to the mountains, “Fall on us!”
and to the hills, “Cover us!” ’

31For if men do these things while the tree is green, what will happen when it
is dry?”

32Two others, who were criminals, were also led away to be executed with
Jesus.

33When they came to the place called The Skull, they crucified Him there,
along with the criminals, one on His right and the other on His left.

34Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are
doing.” And they divided up His garments by casting lots.

35The people stood watching, and the rulers sneered at Him, saying, “He
saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ of God, the Chosen
One.”

36The soldiers also mocked Him and came up to offer Him sour wine. 37“If You
are the King of the Jews,” they said, “save Yourself!”

38Above Him was posted an inscription:

THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

39One of the criminals who hung there heaped abuse on Him. “Are You not
the Christ?” he said. “Save Yourself and us!”

40But the other one rebuked him, saying, “Do you not even fear God, since
you are under the same judgment? 41We are punished justly, for we are
receiving what our actions deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.”
42Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom!”

43And Jesus said to him, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with Me in
Paradise.”

The Death of Jesus

(Psalms 31:1–24; Matthew 27:45–56; Mark 15:33–41; John 19:28–30)

44It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness came over all the land until
the ninth hour. 45The sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was torn
down the middle.

46Then Jesus called out in a loud voice, “Father, into Your hands I commit My
Spirit.” And when He had said this, He breathed His last.

47When the centurion saw what had happened, he gave glory to God, saying,
“Surely this was a righteous man.” 48And when all the people who had
gathered for this spectacle saw what had happened, they returned home
beating their breasts. 49But all those who knew Jesus, including the women
who had followed Him from Galilee, stood at a distance watching these
things.

The Burial of Jesus

(Isaiah 53:9–12; Matthew 27:57–61; Mark 15:42–47; John 19:38–42)

50Now there was a Council member named Joseph, a good and righteous
man, 51who had not consented to their decision or action. He was from the
Judean town of Arimathea, and was waiting for the kingdom of God. 52He
went to Pilate to ask for the body of Jesus. 53Then he took it down, wrapped it
in a linen cloth, and placed it in a tomb cut into the rock, where no one had
yet been laid. 54It was Preparation Day, and the Sabbath was beginning.

55The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed, and they saw
the tomb and how His body was placed. 56Then they returned to prepare
spices and perfumes. And they rested on the Sabbath, according to the
commandment.

The Crucifixion

(Psalms 22:1–31; Matthew 27:32–44; Mark 15:21–32; Luke 23:26–43)

16 Then Pilate handed Jesus over to be crucified, and the soldiers took Him
away. 17 Carrying His own cross, He went out to The Place of the Skull, which
in Hebrew is called Golgotha.

18 There they crucified Him, and with Him two others, one on each side, with
Jesus in the middle.

19 Pilate also had a notice posted on the cross. It read:

JESUS OF NAZARETH,
THE KING OF THE JEWS.

20 Many of the Jews read this sign, because the place where Jesus was
crucified was near the city, and it was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek.
21 So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, “Do not write, ‘The King of the
Jews,’ but only that He said, ‘I am the King of the Jews.’ ”

22 Pilate answered, “What I have written, I have written.”

23 When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they divided His garments into four
parts, one for each soldier, with the tunic remaining. It was seamless, woven
in one piece from top to bottom. 24 So they said to one another, “Let us not
tear it. Instead, let us cast lots to see who will get it.” This was to fulfill the
Scripture:

> “They divided My garments among them,
> and cast lots for My clothing.”

So that is what the soldiers did.

25 Near the cross of Jesus stood His mother and her sister, as well as Mary the
wife of Clopas and Mary Magdalene. 26 When Jesus saw His mother and the
disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, “Woman,
here is your son.” 27 Then He said to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” So
from that hour, this disciple took her into his home.

The Death of Jesus

(Psalms 22:1–31; Matthew 27:45–56; Mark 15:33–41; Luke 23:44–49)

28 After this, knowing that everything had now been accomplished, and to
fulfill the Scripture, Jesus said, “I am thirsty.” 29 A jar of sour wine was sitting
there. So they soaked a sponge in the wine, put it on a stalk of hyssop, and
lifted it to His mouth. 30 When Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, “It is
finished.” And bowing His head, He yielded up His spirit.

Jesus’ Side Is Pierced

(Zechariah 12:10–14)

31It was the day of Preparation, and the next day was a High Sabbath. In
order that the bodies would not remain on the cross during the Sabbath, the
Jews asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies removed. 32So the
soldiers came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified
with Jesus, and those of the other.

33But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did
not break His legs. 34Instead, one of the soldiers pierced His side with a
spear, and immediately blood and water flowed out. 35The one who saw it
has testified to this, and his testimony is true. He knows that he is telling the
truth, so that you also may believe.

36Now these things happened so that the Scripture would be fulfilled: “Not
one of His bones will be broken.” 37And, as another Scripture says: “They will
look on the One they have pierced.”

The Burial of Jesus

(Isaiah 53:9–12; Matthew 27:57–61; Mark 15:42–47; Luke 23:50–56)

38Afterward, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus (but secretly for
fear of the Jews), asked Pilate to let him remove the body of Jesus. Pilate
gave him permission, so he came and removed His body. 39Nicodemus, who
had previously come to Jesus at night, also brought a mixture of myrrh and
aloes, about seventy-five pounds. 40So they took the body of Jesus and
wrapped it in linen cloths with the spices, according to the Jewish burial
custom.

41Now there was a garden in the place where Jesus was crucified, and in the
garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. 42And because it was
the Jewish day of Preparation and the tomb was nearby, they placed Jesus
there.

Notes

(1)) *Nelson's Complete Book Of Bible Maps And Charts*, 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010., p.313.
(2) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.333.
(3) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009., p.401.
(4) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009., p.406.
(5) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.335.
(6) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011., p.320.
(7) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.228.
(8) See Appendix A for a suggested sequence of events, adapted from Carson, D. A. ed. *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015., p.2206.
(9) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009., p.402.
(10) Pate, C. Marvin. *The Writings of John: A Survey of the Gospel, Epistles, and Apocalypse*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011., p.200.
(11) Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020., p.389.
(12) Pate, C. Marvin. *The Writings of John: A Survey of the Gospel, Epistles, and Apocalypse*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011., p.200.
(13) Pate, C. Marvin. *The Writings of John: A Survey of the Gospel, Epistles, and Apocalypse*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011., p.200.
(14) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.334.
(15) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.279.
(16) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.279.
(17) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.179.

(18) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009., p.403-404.
(19) Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020., p.389.
(20) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.179.
(21) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.229.
(22) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009., p.405.
(23) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.229.
(24) Pate, C. Marvin. *The Writings of John: A Survey of the Gospel, Epistles, and Apocalypse*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011., p.202.
(25) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011., p.320.
(26) Carson, D. A. ed. *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015., 1949, 2021., p.2195.
(27) Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020., p.390.
(28) Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020., p.390.
(29) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.229.
(30) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009., p.406.
(31) Pate, C. Marvin. *The Writings of John: A Survey of the Gospel, Epistles, and Apocalypse*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011., p.205.
(32)) *Nelson's Complete Book Of Bible Maps And Charts*, 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010., p.340.
(33) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011., p.320.
(34) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.320.
(35) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009., p.401.
(36) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009., p.408.
(37) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.335.
(38) Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020., p.390.
(39) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.321.

Bibliography

Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009.

Carson, D. A. ed. *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015.

Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011.

Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995.

Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012.

Nelson's Complete Book Of Bible Maps And Charts, 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010.

Pate, C. Marvin. *The Writings of John: A Survey of the Gospel, Epistles, and Apocalypse*. Grand
Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011.

Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020.

The Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus Christ

"He is not here; He has risen! Remember how He told you while He was still in Galilee: 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again.' "
Luke 24:6–7 (BSB)

Introduction:

The above Bible verse tells us about the resurrection of Jesus Christ, as He Himself had foretold. As recorded in the Gospels, the 'third day' (what we call 'Easter Day') after His crucifixion, death and burial is the day the event of the resurrection takes place, as Jesus Christ is raised from the dead by God the Father. (1) The resurrection is already mentioned in the Old Testament (Job 14:14; 19:25; Isaiah 25:8; Daniel 12:2; Hosea 13:14 and King David's Psalm, that is Psalm 16:8-11). (2) Having witnessed the resurrection and ascension, the Apostle Peter refers to the same Davidic Psalm at Pentecost (Acts 2:25-28) after the Holy Spirit has arrived.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ as an indication that He is both the Christ (the Messiah and Lord in Acts 2:36), is God's revelation of Jesus' atoning sacrifice for the sins of all believers and God's assurance for all Christians, that they too, will be resurrected and glorified as God's people (1 Corinthians 15:20-28) on Judgment Day (Christ's Second Coming). (3) While the Gospels provide different accounts of the events about the resurrection (Matthew 28, Mark 15; Luke 24 and John 20-21) and it is challenging to harmonize an exact sequence of events (4), all accounts attest to the resurrection as fact - Jesus was crucified, died, buried and now is seen alive. (5) Christ's ascension is revealed in Luke 24:50-53 and Acts 1:3-8.

This unique and most important event in the history of mankind, must not be taken lightly, since ultimately, it means the difference of every person's eternal destiny - being in heaven with Christ as believer, or being in hell without Christ forever (John 3:16-21). The following provides a commentary on both events, that is Christ's resurrection and ascension as

recorded in the Gospels, considering the theological implications of both events.

The Women Visit the Tomb

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved. “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb,” she said, “and we do not know where they have put Him!”
John 20:1–2 (BSB)

Commentary:

In this passage, we learn about Mary Magdalene, a follower of Jesus, coming to His tomb before dawn, only to find that the stone in front of the entrance has been removed (v.1). This prompts her to run to the Apostles Peter and John telling them that apparently Jesus’ body has been removed (v.2). Here we can see how the Gospel accounts record different and unique, yet not contradictory, details about Christ’s resurrection. (6) At this point in the sequence of events, Mary Magdalene arrives at the tomb first, being part of a group of women coming to the tomb (Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:1-3; Luke 24:1) - and two angels, one acting as spokesman, announces the resurrection of Jesus (Matthew 28:2-7; Mark 16:4-7; Luke 24:2-7). (7) The women then leave the garden tomb, with Mary Magdalene running ahead of the other women (8) to tell both Peter and the “disciple, the one whom Jesus loved” (that is the Apostle John) about the situation (v.2). (9) Similar to the announcement of Jesus’ conception (Matthew 1:20-24; Luke 2:1-7) and His birth (Luke 2:8-20) angels serve as God’s divine messengers to proclaim the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Peter and John at the Empty Tomb

Then Peter and the other disciple set out for the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down and looked in at the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. Simon Peter arrived just after him. He entered the tomb and saw the linen cloths lying there. The cloth that had been around Jesus' head was rolled up, lying separate from the linen cloths. Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in. And he saw and believed. For they still did not understand from the Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to their homes.
John 20:3–10 (BSB)

Commentary:

In this segment, we have Peter and John arrive at the empty tomb of Christ, whereby both see the same empty tomb, and yet have two different responses (v.6 and v.8). The fact that the grave clothes of Jesus are still in the tomb makes it improbable that grave robbers had stolen the Lord's body, and yet left the valuable garment behind. While v.9 reminds us that the two disciples at that point did not understand the fulfillment of Old Testament Scripture (possibly Psalms 16:10; Isaiah 53:10-12; Hosea 6:2) this does not account for their different dispositions of faith. (10) It is the disciple John, upon seeing the empty tomb and the garments, who is the first to believe in the resurrection of Jesus. (11)

Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

But Mary stood outside the tomb weeping. And as she wept, she bent down to look into the tomb, and she saw two angels in white sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and the other at the feet. “Woman, why are you weeping?” they asked. “Because they have taken my Lord away,” she said, “and I do not know where they have put Him.” When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there; but she did not recognize that it was Jesus. “Woman, why are you weeping?” Jesus asked. “Whom are you seeking?” Thinking He was the gardener, she said, “Sir, if you have carried Him off, tell me where you have put Him, and I will get Him.” Jesus said to her, “Mary.” She turned and said to Him in Hebrew, “Rabboni!” (which means “Teacher”). “Do not cling to Me,” Jesus said, “for I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go and tell My brothers, ‘I am ascending to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God.’ ” Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord!” And she told them what He had said to her.
John 20:11–18 (BSB)

Commentary:

After the two disciples have gone home, the resurrected Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene making her the first eyewitness to the risen Christ. This event, as we see in the above passage, occurs in several steps. First, Mary sees two angels as she looks inside the tomb as she weeps, and they ask her why she is weeping (v.12-13). Second, Mary sees Jesus, but does not recognize Him, presuming He is the gardener (v.15). Third, when Jesus utters her name (v.16), she immediately recognizes Him. (12) Since Jesus is the Good Shepherd, she recognizes his voice, because she is one of His sheep (John 10:3-4, 14, 16, 27). (13)

In v.17 Jesus tells Mary not to cling to Him, since He has not ascended yet, and therefore has not yet sent the Holy Spirit (the Paraclete). (14) Instead, Mary is called to testify and witness to Jesus as risen Lord (v.18) which she does, by announcing her encounter to the disciples. (15)

Jesus Appears to the Other Women

Suddenly Jesus met them and said, “Greetings!” They came to Him, grasped His feet, and worshiped Him. “Do not be afraid,” said Jesus. “Go and tell My brothers to go to Galilee. There they will see Me.”
Matthew 28:9–10 (BSB)

Commentary:

In this passage Jesus appears to the other women, who respond to Him in a similar way like Mary Magdalene (v.9) and Jesus gives them specific instructions, while at the same time comforting them and telling them not to be afraid (v.10). Important here is that Jesus is referring to His disciples as “brothers” (v.10) which is a conformation that He has restored the disciples, as they are identified as members of the true family of Jesus (Matthew 12:50). (16) What stands out is that Jesus seeks out all that are His, that is all who believe in Him - so just as Christ had revealed Himself to Mary Magdalene - He does the same for the remaining women who went to the tomb, commissioning them to be His witnesses. (17)

The Report of the Guards

While the women were on their way, some of the guards went into the city and reported to the chief priests all that had happened. And after the chief priests had met with the elders and formed a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money and instructed them: “You are to say, ‘His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep.’ If this report reaches the governor, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.” So the guards took the money and did as they were instructed. And this account has been circulated among the Jews to this very day.
Matthew 28:11–15 (BSB)

Commentary:

After the initial events surrounding the angel of the Lord descending from heaven to roll away the stone in front of Jesus’ tomb, and the subsequent fear and unconsciousness of the people guarding the tomb (Matthew 28:2-4), these same Roman guards report what happened to the Jewish chief priests (v.11). This segment points to the authenticity of the resurrection, in that even though there is no description of how Jesus was actually raised from the dead, the fainting of the Roman guards, their recovery and initial attempt of some to report to the chief priests, instead of

their superior - the Roman governor, Pilate - is plausible, since they would have faced the death penalty under Roman law for failing their duty. (18)

Along with their bribe of the soldiers, their instructions given, that the disciples came and stole the body while they were sleeping (v.13) still leaves the guards open to punishment by their superior. (19) The contrast between Jesus, whose every word is truth, and the deceitfulness of the religious leaders stands out here, since they continue in their evil schemes, attempting to cover up the resurrection by means of lies and bribes. (20) As such, the earliest attempts of trying to explain the resurrection away, fails, as we see here. (21) All the Jewish leaders would have to do, was to produce the body of Christ as evidence that He had not risen: They could not.

Jesus Appears to Two Disciples on the Road to Emmaus

That same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. And as they talked and deliberated, Jesus Himself came up and walked along with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing Him. He asked them, ***"What are you discussing so intently as you walk along?"*** They stood still, with sadness on their faces. One of them, named Cleopas, asked Him, "Are You the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in recent days?" ***"What things?"*** He asked. "The events involving Jesus of Nazareth," they answered. "This man was a prophet, powerful in speech and action before God and all the people. Our chief priests and rulers delivered Him up to the sentence of death, and they crucified Him. But we were hoping He was the One who would redeem Israel. And besides all this, it is the third day since these things took place. Furthermore, some of our women astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, but they did not find His body. They came and told us they had seen a vision of angels, who said that Jesus was alive. Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had described. But Him they did not see." Then Jesus said to them, ***"O foolish ones, how slow are your hearts to believe all that***

the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and then to enter His glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He explained to them what was written in all the Scriptures about Himself. As they approached the village where they were headed, He seemed to be going farther. But they pleaded with Him, “Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over.” So He went in to stay with them. While He was reclining at the table with them, He took bread, spoke a blessing and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Jesus—and He disappeared from their sight. They asked each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us as He spoke with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?” And they got up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, gathered together and saying, “The Lord has indeed risen and has appeared to Simon!” Then the two told what had happened on the road, and how they had recognized Jesus in the breaking of the bread.
Luke 24:13–35 (BSB)

Commentary:

This passage, unique to the Gospel of Luke, provides us with a summary of the foregoing event of the same day (v.22-24), the first ‘Bible Study’ in the New Testament (v.27) and a culmination of valuable eyewitness testimony, as Jesus reveals Himself to those two disciples having supper together (v.31).

The level of detail is remarkable in this passage, since we learn about the name of one of the disciples (‘Cleopas’) and the distance of their journey from Jerusalem to Emmaus (‘about seven miles’) as part of circumstantial evidence in this account, pointing to the reliability of the testimony of these two individuals, who are outside the inner circle of the eleven disciples. (22)

The sadness and the initial failure of recognizing Jesus as He walks with them, Jesus explaining how the Old Testament Scriptures point to Him as Messiah, along with their later reflection on their feeling of warmth (v.32) and their response to walk back to Jerusalem in the darkness of night to tell the others what had happened (v.33) are not only unusual, but provide a high level of reliability attesting to the truthfulness of this passage - this is then furthered by the fact that Jesus had appeared to Peter (v.33) which adds a second eyewitness testimony. (23) As Jesus explains how all that had happened points back to Scripture being fulfilled (24), Jesus’ in His glorified resurrected body is now able to appear, disappear, and move between different locations without being hindered by space and time. (25)

Jesus Appears to Ten Disciples *Without* Thomas

It was the first day of the week, and that very evening, while the disciples were together with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them. ***“Peace be with you!”*** He said to them. After He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Again Jesus said to them, ***“Peace be with you. As the Father has sent Me, so also I am sending you.”*** When He had said this, He breathed on them and said, ***“Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you withhold forgiveness from anyone, it is withheld.”*** Now Thomas called Didymus, one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!” But he replied, “Unless I see the nail marks in His hands, and put my finger where the nails have been, and put my hand into His side, I will never believe.”
John 20:19–25 (BSB)

Commentary:

This passage, possibly part of the same event as described in Luke 24:36-37, shows that Jesus in His resurrected body is now able to move about at will (“the doors locked for fear of the Jews” in v.19) as He reveals Himself to His disciples (without Thomas being there). (26) Christ’s greeting “Peace be with you” (v.19, 21), a common Jewish greeting still in use today, can be seen as a way of revelation (Judges 6:23; Daniel 10:19) and a way of comforting and reconciling His disciples to Himself, since they had deserted Him at the cross, and especially Peter, who had denied Jesus. (27)

In the process of revealing Himself, Jesus makes clear to the disciples that he has a real body, showing His crucifixion wounds (v.20) to prove that He had truly risen. (28) As they rejoice over Him, Jesus then initiates their commissioning “breathing on them” (v.22) announcing the coming of the Holy Spirit (fulfilled at Pentecost in Acts 2) - this event is a unique, nonrepeatable experience, different from how the Holy Spirit empowers Christians today. (29) The forgiving and retaining sins, points to the unique authority given to the disciples as they encounter belief and unbelief in response to the gospel. (30)

Jesus Appears to the Disciples *With* Thomas

Eight days later, His disciples were once again inside with the doors locked, and Thomas was with them. Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” Then Jesus said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and look at My hands. Reach out your hand and put it into My side. Stop doubting and believe.” Thomas replied, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus said to him, “Because you have seen Me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.
John 20:26–31 (BSB)

Commentary:

In this segment, we encounter the risen Lord Jesus as He manifests Himself again to the disciples, this time including the disciple Thomas. Even though the disciples had told Thomas about their witness to the risen Lord, Thomas insists that this is false (v.25) which Jesus counteracts by revealing Himself to Thomas (and the others again), prompting Thomas to sate “My Lord and My God!” (v.26-28). (31) The confession of Thomas of Jesus as his “Lord” and “God” are expressions often used in the Old Testament referring to Yahweh (Psalms 35:23-24). (32) Jesus then announces the blessing upon those who believe in Him without having seen Him (v.29). This leads to the concluding part of this passage (v.30-31) in which the Apostle John reveals the purpose of his book, which is, that belief in Jesus as the Christ, that is the Son of God, provides eternal life (v.31). (33)

Jesus Appears to Seven Disciples at the Sea of Galilee

Later, by the Sea of Tiberias, Jesus again revealed Himself to the disciples. He made Himself known in this way: Simon Peter, Thomas called Didymus, Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together. Simon Peter told them, “I am going fishing.” “We will go with

you," they said. So they went out and got into the boat, but caught nothing that night. Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not recognize that it was Jesus. So He called out to them, ***"Children, do you have any fish?"*** "No," they answered. He told them, ***"Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some."*** So they cast it there, and they were unable to haul it in because of the great number of fish. Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" As soon as Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment (for he had removed it) and jumped into the sea. The other disciples came ashore in the boat. They dragged in the net full of fish, for they were not far from land, only about a hundred yards. When they landed, they saw a charcoal fire there with fish on it, and some bread. Jesus told them, ***"Bring some of the fish you have just caught."*** So Simon Peter went aboard and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many, the net was not torn. ***"Come, have breakfast,"*** Jesus said to them. None of the disciples dared to ask Him, "Who are You?" They knew it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and He did the same with the fish. This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after He was raised from the dead. When they had finished eating, Jesus asked Simon Peter, ***"Simon son of John, do you love Me more than these?"*** "Yes, Lord," he answered, "You know I love You." Jesus replied, ***"Feed My lambs."*** Jesus asked a second time, ***"Simon son of John, do you love Me?"*** "Yes, Lord," he answered, "You know I love You." Jesus told him, ***"Shepherd My sheep."*** Jesus asked a third time, ***"Simon son of John, do you love Me?"*** Peter was deeply hurt that Jesus had asked him a third time, "Do you love Me?" "Lord, You know all things," he replied. "You know I love You." Jesus said to him, ***"Feed My sheep. Truly, truly, I tell you, when you were young, you dressed yourself and walked where you wanted; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go."*** Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. And after He had said this, He told him, ***"Follow Me."*** Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them. He was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper to ask, "Lord, who is going to betray You?" When Peter saw him, he asked, "Lord, what about him?" Jesus answered, ***"If I want him to remain until I return, what is that to you? You follow Me!"*** Because of this, the rumor spread among the brothers that this disciple would not die. However, Jesus did not say that he would not die, but only, "If I want him to remain until I return, what is that to you?" This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who has written them down. And we know that his testimony is true. There are many more things that Jesus did. If all of them were written down, I suppose that not even the world itself would have space for the books that would be written.
John 21:1–25 (BSB)

Commentary:

Here, Jesus reveals Himself to His disciples for “the third time” (v.14). While we do not know why Peter wanted to go fishing again, the miracle Jesus performs here, reminding us of the miracle at the time of Peter’s original call (Luke 5:1-11) - and significantly, Jesus initiates a threefold affirmation of Peter’s love, counterbalancing Peter’s prior threefold denial. (34)

It is the rehabilitation of Peter that is at the centre of this segment (v.15-23). The threefold command Jesus gives to Peter (v.15-17) is found in the Old Testament, pointing to a good shepherd, who truly cares about his sheep (Ezekiel 34; Jerimiah 3:15; Isaiah 44:28). (35)

In v.18-23 Jesus talks about the fate of Peter and John (‘the beloved disciple’) and predicts that Peter will die by crucifixion (v.18), whereas John’s fate is not specified. (36) Just as we as believers are called to focus on our own personal walk of faith with Jesus, and not compare ourselves with others, so does Jesus admonish Peter to do the same (v.22) by focusing on his own walk with our Lord. (37)

The Gospel ends with an emphasis on the trustworthiness of the Apostle John’s testimony (v.24-25). (38) The final statement dealing with the “many more things that Jesus did” (v.25) recalls the Old Testament (Ecclesiastes 12:12) and is consistent with Greco-Roman and Jewish literature at the time. (39)

The Great Commission

Meanwhile, the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain Jesus had designated. When they saw Him, they worshiped Him, but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, ***“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”***

Matthew 28:16–20 (BSB)

Commentary:

Just prior to His ascension, the risen Christ, gives instructions commonly known as ‘Great Commission.’ Here, on a mountain in Galilee, Jesus specifies what He expects His disciples (and us as believers) to do: that is to share and spread the gospel (‘good news’) all over the world (v.19). (40) The mentioning of ‘doubt’ in v.17, points to the authenticity of this event at the time, since the resurrection of Jesus would lead people to some level of perplexity (i.e. “is what I am witnessing here truly happening?”). His disciples can do all this with confidence, since Jesus assures us of His universal authority (v.18) and His promise to be with all believers: “And surely I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (v.20) which is His personal blessing to Christians, as we face persecution and hardship, while fulfilling the Great Commission. (41)

The Ascension

When Jesus had led them out as far as Bethany, He lifted up His hands and blessed them. While He was blessing them, He left them and was carried up into heaven. And they worshiped Him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, praising God continually in the temple.
Luke 24:50–53 (BSB)

So when they came together, they asked Him, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” Jesus replied, ***“It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by His own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”*** After He had said this, they watched as He was taken up, and a cloud hid Him from their sight. They were looking intently into the sky as He was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen Him go into heaven.”
Acts 1:6–11 (BSB)

Commentary:

The ascension of Jesus as recorded in both Luke and Acts (with more detail), is just as unique and astonishing as the coming of Christ, His resurrection and an important part of Christianity. Occurring forty days after His resurrection, the bodily ascension into heaven of Jesus completes His

physical ministry on earth, and yet also initiates another phase in His ministry, in that at Pentecost, Jesus sends the promised Holy Spirit. (42)

Luke records the blessing Jesus bestows upon all His followers (Luke 24:50) which is then continued in Acts 1:9, where Jesus is taken up and hidden by a cloud (Acts 1:9). In Acts 1:10-11, we learn about two angelic beings appearing, reminding the disciples that Jesus will return from heaven at His Second Coming on Judgment Day, and that in the meantime, there is work to do here on earth - that is, to fulfill the Great Commission.

With Luke writing both Luke and Acts, the resurrection and ascension unify the significance of Chris's exaltation. (43) The cloud which hides Jesus from the disciples' view, points to the presence of God the Father (similar to the events at Jesus' baptism and transfiguration). (44) The event of the ascension is repeatedly alluded to in the New Testament: Peter mentions it (Acts 2:33-34; 3:21), Paul repeatedly refers to it (Acts 13:30-37; Ephesians 4:8-10; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-16), as does John's revelation (Revelation 1:13; 5:6; 14:14; 19:11-16; 22:1) and it has been part of the Christian church ever since. (45)

Theological Implications of the Resurrection and Ascension

For if the dead are not raised, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If our hope in Christ is for this life alone, we are to be pitied more than all men. But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.
1 Corinthians 15:16–20 (BSB)

As seen in the foregoing commentary, we have unique records of eyewitness testimony that attest to the fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Along with the ascension of Christ the resurrection is *the* supreme event in human history. (46) So let us examine here some of the theological implications of both events.

Considering the testimony of the Apostle Paul in the opening passage above, the entire Christian faith rests on the fact of Christ's resurrection.

While other religions at times do lay claim to supernatural events, only Christianity holds to the fact of the resurrection, which is open to methods of historical research - so any objective investigation will have to begin with the events of Jesus' ministry, recorded within half a century following His life. (47)

After the so-called 'Age of Enlightenment' which often denies even the possibility of miracles from the outset, rational explanations of the resurrection surfaced, which appear in popular culture today, from time to time. (48) Nevertheless, Christianity claims the resurrection of Jesus as definite historical event *and* a dimension that is not open to historical investigation, such as Christ's Second Coming, since it has not occurred yet. (49) Using a so-called 'minimal facts approach' (combining both biblical and extrabiblical evidence), we can identify five facts (50): First, Jesus was crucified and died. Second, Jesus' disciples believed in His resurrection appearances. Third, the former church persecutor Saul (later becoming the Apostle Paul) underwent a sudden change. Fourth, James, the half-brother of Jesus suddenly changed from skeptic to believer. Five, Jesus' tomb was empty. Thus, while many other theories about Christ's resurrection have been put forth, none of them adequately accounts for these five facts. (51)

The witnesses to the resurrection of Christ and the unfolding events as presented in the Gospels point to the historicity of the resurrection - as such, the witnesses include women coming to the tomb that morning, the witnesses to the empty tomb (like John and Peter), the witnesses of the Roman soldiers who feared for their life and fainted, the witnesses hearing angels speak, the witnesses walking on the road to Emmaus, the disciples' witness in the upper room, other eyewitnesses as recorded by the Apostle Paul (1 Corinthians 15:5-8) including Jesus' appearing to more than 500 people at the same time, and many others. (52) (53) Christ's resurrection appearances at a specific time, place and to specific people are best explained by our Lord's bodily resurrection - along with the empty tomb and the subsequent solid faith of the disciples, only the fact of the resurrection does justice to the events recorded in the Bible, hence other interpretations and reasons about the resurrection must be rejected. (54)

The resurrection is directly linked to Christ's ascension in that it is a partial fulfillment of Jesus' prayer in John 17:5, 24 that His disciples would witness His glory, which will be completed on the day of Christ's return to judge (Acts 1:11; Hebrews 9:28; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 2 Timothy 4:1; Revelation 1:5). (55) As the ascended Christ, He intercedes for all believers at God's right hand (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 4:14; 6:20; 7:20) as our advocate - providing hope, peace and security for Christians (1 John 2:1). (56)

What then are the theological implications of the resurrection and the ascension of Christ? As we learn from the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 15 the resurrection of Christ helps us in our walk of faith with Jesus, and keeps us safe as believers from man-made ideas and philosophy. (57) The resurrection is primarily a theology of vindication - First, even though initially Jesus' death appeared to be God having rejected Him, His resurrection vindicates Him as true Messiah. Second, God raising Christ from the dead vindicates His teaching and atoning work. Third, Christ's resurrection by God initiates a new era, to be finalized at Jesus' Second Coming, which is the 'already, not yet' that the Apostle Paul alludes to, referring to the resurrected Christ as the "first fruits" of the harvest in the age to come (1 Corinthians 15:20, 23). (58)

It is here that we see the exaltation of Christ in both His resurrection (John 2:19-21 which He Himself promised (59) and His ascension. As risen Lord, we have proof of Christ as divine Son (Acts 13:33; Romans 1:3), Messiah (Acts 2:36; 3:13-15; 5:31), God endorsing Christ as mediator (Acts 2:23-24; Romans 6:4), Christ's exaltation as suffering servant (Luke 24:26; Acts 2:33; Philippians 2:9), Christ guaranteeing our justification and forgiveness (Romans 4:25; Acts 5:31), the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:33), eternal life (Romans 6:4), and the basis and pledge for our salvation (Acts 4:2; 1 Corinthians 6:14). (60)

Lastly, Christ's resurrection is part of His atonement, following His ascension - that is, Jesus demonstrates his victory over death (Acts 2:24; 1 Corinthians 15:54-57), as Son of God who is now in heaven. (61) The ascension, then, establishes three things: One, the personal ascendancy of Jesus as executive ruler (Matthew 28:18; 1 Peter 3:22); Two, the spiritual omnipresence of Jesus, who is accessible to all Christians (Hebrews 4:14; 4:16; 7:25; 13:6-8); Three, the heavenly ministry of Christ who actively intervenes for all believers (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25) - so, from Christ's throne, through the Holy Spirit, Jesus intercedes for His children on an ongoing basis (Acts 2:33; John 16:7-14) and equips them to serve Him (Ephesians 4:8-12) in order to fulfill the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20). (62)

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our own eyes, which we have gazed upon and touched with our own hands—this is the Word of life. And this is the life that was revealed; we have seen it and testified to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And this fellowship of ours is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. We write these things so that our joy may be complete.

1 John 1:1–4 (BSB)

Conclusion:

In conclusion, we get a better sense of the significance, importance and uniqueness of the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. Of all religions and belief systems in the world, Christianity is unique in that it rests upon the resurrection of its divine founder. (63) The testimony of the eyewitnesses to these events are what matters here. While the Apostle John is the first person to believe in Jesus' resurrection (John 28:8) as he sees the empty tomb, it is Mary Magdalene to whom Jesus makes His first resurrection appearance (John 20:11-18). (64)

As Jesus' resurrection is bodily, Mary immediately holds on to Him physically (John 20:17), our Lord encourages her to let go of Him, since He has yet to ascend into heaven to complete His glorification and release the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. (65) With the Apostle John, as first believer in Christ risen, and Mary as first eyewitness and believer to the resurrection, we understand the essence of the opening passage above (written by the Apostle John), which is the testimony to the 'Word of Life' (Jesus) having been revealed, and thereby extending the invitation to believe and follow Jesus Christ to everyone (1 John 1:2-3).

Also, the testimony of others (both to the resurrection and others - only to the events surrounding the resurrection) such as the other women (Matthew 28:9-10) along with the report of the Roman guards, followed by the attempted cover-up by the Jewish leaders (Matthew 28:11-15) adds additional details that bolster the case for Christ risen.

Next, the appearance of Jesus to the two disciples en route to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35) links the resurrection to the fulfillment of Old Testament promises, as Jesus conducts the first 'Bible-study,' pointing to Himself as the only One who can provide forgiveness and salvation to anyone with a repentant heart (Luke 24:25-27) - and having revealed Himself to the two by breaking the bread (Luke 24:30-31) and then disappearing, His humanity and simultaneous divinity (being 'God in the Flesh') comes to the forefront. (66) As such, in the Gospel of Luke, the Emmaus' account figures prominently among the gospel resurrection records, in that God's plan in salvation history is fulfilled in and through the risen Christ. (67)

Furthermore, as Jesus appears to the disciples without Thomas (John 20:19-25) and then with Thomas (John 20:26-31), the former event show that Jesus in His resurrected body is not limited by space and time anymore, when the latter event shows that in His glorified and composed body, Jesus causes faith and belief, even in a person who expresses categorical doubt

and skepticism, such as Thomas, who as he encounters the risen Lord, confesses Him as both Lord and God (Yahweh). (68)

Likewise, the third appearance of the risen Lord to the disciples (John 21), while fishing on the sea of Galilee, with Jesus performing a miracle as risen Lord, His miracles prior to His death and resurrection are brought back to mind, such as the feeding of the five thousand (Matthew 14:15-21; Mark 6:35-44; Luke 9:12-17; John 6:6-13) and the initial commissioning of Peter, James and John (Luke 5:1-11). (69) With Jesus restoring Peter back to ministry and calling him to feed His sheep, we have another incident that reveal Jesus as risen Lord. (70)

The call and commissioning of Christ is then recorded as the 'Great Commission' (Matthew 28:16-20). The reference by Jesus to the Trinity ("Father, Son and Holy Spirit" in v.19) affirms the importance of trinitarian doctrine, and just as important is making disciples ("baptizing them" and "teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you") - so, while baptism is an important part of obeying God, it is in no way inferior to the missional dimension Jesus emphasizes here. (71) Having been vindicated in resurrection, Jesus now has the authority to act as God Himself (v.18) as He delegates the Great Commission to the disciples and to all Christians. (72)

The ascension then, marks the end of Jesus' earthly ministry and initiates the beginning of the work of the Holy Spirit, who arrives at Pentecost. Jesus' promise of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4) is more important than any earthly considerations as to restoration of Israel's kingdom, since God's promise is already found in the Old Testament (Isaiah 44:3; Ezekiel 36:27; 39:29; Joel 2:28-29). (73) Jesus' ascension is not a disappearance, but Him going to a 'real place in heaven'; it is also in this way that Christ receives honor and glory as 'God-Man' previously unknown; Jesus is now seated at the right hand of God (aka. 'Christ's Session'). (74) As a consequence of Christ's resurrection and ascension, He will return at His Second Coming as reigning Messiah (Acts 3:20-21). (76) The ascension as risen Lord is an encouragement to all believers, who are indwelt and guided by the Holy Spirit. (77)

In addition, considering the theological implications of the resurrection and ascension, we see that even though there are no authentic accounts of any person in the ancient world who was raised to an eternal existence, let alone any accompanying eyewitness records (78), and even though, especially today, there is a pre-disposition within the Christian church to undervalue or even discount the fact of Christ's resurrection (79), there is no need and no good reason to do so, since there is more than enough credible evidence to establish the resurrection as a fact, making a cumulative case for our Lord's resurrection (80), while still leaving room for faith and belief in Jesus Christ.

With Christianity having at its core the resurrection of Christ as factual space-time event in human history (81), despite unsubstantiated theories that deny the resurrection historically, there are different ‘proofs’ that point to the truthfulness of the resurrection, such as the ‘minimal facts’ approach. (82) A complimentary ‘proofing’ of the fact of the resurrection can be seen in the empty tomb, Christ’s grave clothes, His resurrection appearances, the transformation of the disciples, observing the first day of the week and the existence of the church. (83)

The meaning of the resurrection and ascension, is found primarily in the person of Jesus Christ Himself. Jesus has the power to provide eternal life, He can and will never die again, since death no longer has any power over Him (Romans 6:9, 10), and thus, His resurrection demonstrates His victory over Satan (the devil) who held the power of death (1 Corinthians 15:21; Hebrews 2:14; 2 Timothy 1:10) (84) In line with this, Christ’s ascension, is a manifestation of His exaltation by God, until the moment He consummates all things (Acts 3:21). (85)

What matters most is that belief in Jesus and *Jesus only*, is the way to eternal salvation. By contrast, unbelief leads to eternal damnation and separation from Christ in hell. The doctrine of the resurrection (Acts 24:15) is also mentioned by Jesus Himself (John 5:25, 28-29). (86)

Lastly, the resurrection and ascension of Christ, not only validate the entire Bible (Old Testament and New Testament) as true, it reminds us of Jesus’ promised return at His Second Coming (Judgment Day), and the bodily resurrection is our guarantee as Christians, that we, too will be raised to eternal life - having been assured of our forgiveness and unbreakable salvation through faith in Jesus (87) Since Christ has reconciled us to God through His atoning sacrifice, verified as risen Savior (88), the call is to believe the gospel (89):

> Therefore, since we have now been justified by His blood, how much more shall we be saved from wrath through Him! For if, when we were enemies of God, we were reconciled to Him through the death of His Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through His life!
>
> Romans 5:9–10 (BSB)

Notes

(1) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.335-336.
(2) Stanley, Charles F. C*harles Stanley's Handbook for Christian living: Biblical Answers to Life's Tough Questions*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2008., p.229.
(3) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009., p.409.
(4) See Appendix B for a suggested chronological sequence of events, adapted from Carson, D. A. ed. *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015., p.2206.
(5) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.336.
(6) *Nelson's Complete Book Of Bible Maps And Charts*, 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010., p.314.
(7) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009., p.413.
(8) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009., p.413.
(9) Pate, C. Marvin. *The Writings of John: A Survey of the Gospel, Epistles, and Apocalypse*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011., p.211.
(10) Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007., p.506.
(11) Pate, C. Marvin. *The Writings of John: A Survey of the Gospel, Epistles, and Apocalypse*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011., p.212.
(12) Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008., p.286.
(13) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.322.
(14) Pate, C. Marvin. *The Writings of John: A Survey of the Gospel, Epistles, and Apocalypse*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011., p.212-213.
(15) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009., p.417.
(16) Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020., p.289.
(17) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009., p.413.
(18) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.336.
(19) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.229.
(20) Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020., p.289.

(21) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009., p.415.
(22) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.280.
(23) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.280.
(24) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.336.
(25) Packer, J. I. *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1993., p.141-142.
(26) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.336.
(27) Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007., p.506.
(28) Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008., p.286-287.
(29) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009., p.417.
(30) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.322.
(31) Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008., p.287.
(32) Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007., p.507.
(33) Pate, C. Marvin. *The Writings of John: A Survey of the Gospel, Epistles, and Apocalypse*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011., p.214.
(34) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009., p.418.
(35) Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007., p.507.
(36) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.324.
(37) Pate, C. Marvin. *The Writings of John: A Survey of the Gospel, Epistles, and Apocalypse*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011., p.220.
(38) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009., p.418.
(39) Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007., p.507.
(40) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009., p.413.
(41) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.230.
(42) Nelson, Thomas. *NIV Chronological Study Bible*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2014., p.1260.

(43) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009., p.416.
(44) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.340.
(45) Bavinck, Herman, and John Bolt. 2011. *Reformed Dogmatics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011., p.457.
(46) *Nelson's Complete Book Of Bible Maps And Charts*, 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010., p.377.
(47) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.139.
(48) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009., p.409.
(49) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011., p.1228.
(50) Habermas, Gary R., and Mike Licona. *The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2004., p.75-76.
(51) For a detailed outline of arguments pointing to the resurrection as fact, see Habermas, Gary R., and Mike Licona. *The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2004., p.219-247.
(52) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.337.
(53) See Appendix C for a chart of Jesus' resurrection appearances, adapted from Carson, D. A. ed. *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015., p.2137.
(54) Bavinck, Herman, and John Bolt. 2011. *Reformed Dogmatics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011., p.456.
(55) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.337.
(56) Nelson, Thomas. *NIV Chronological Study Bible*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2014., p.1260.
(57) *Nelson's Complete Book Of Bible Maps And Charts*, 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010., p.376.
(58) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011., p.1230.
(59) Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008., p.286.
(60) Bavinck, Herman, and John Bolt. 2011. *Reformed Dogmatics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011., p.456.
(61) Packer, J. I. *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1993., p.141-142.
(62) Packer, J. I. *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1993., p.143-144.
(63) Groothuis, Douglas R. *Christian Apologetics: A comprehensive Case for Biblical Faith*. [2nd ed.]. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2022., p.567.

(64) Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008., p.286.
(65) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.322.
(66) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009., p.416.
(67) Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020., p.336.
(68) Pate, C. Marvin. *The Writings of John: A Survey of the Gospel, Epistles, and Apocalypse*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011., p.213-214.
(69) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.323.
(70) Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008., p.287.
(71) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009., p.415-416.
(72) Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020., p.289.
(73) Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012., p.339-340.
(74) Grudem, Wayne A. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand
Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000., p.617-618.
(75) Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020., p.337.
(76) Nelson, Thomas. *NIV Chronological Study Bible*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2014., p.1260.
(77) Packer, J. I. *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1993., p.143-144.
(78) Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009., p.410.
(79) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011., p.1229.
(80) Groothuis, Douglas R. *Christian Apologetics: A comprehensive Case for Biblical Faith*. [2nd ed.]. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2022., p.601.
(81) Packer, J. I. *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1993., p.141-142.
(82) Habermas, Gary R., and Mike Licona. *The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2004., p.75-76.
(83) Enns, Paul P. *The Moody Handbook of Theology: Revised and Expanded*. Chicago, IL:
Moody Publishers, 2014., p.248.
(84) Bavinck, Herman, and John Bolt. 2011. *Reformed Dogmatics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011., p.454-455.
(85) Bavinck, Herman, and John Bolt. 2011. *Reformed Dogmatics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011., p.457-458.

(86) Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011., p.1228.
(87) Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995., p.337.
(88) Bavinck, Herman, and John Bolt. 2011. *Reformed Dogmatics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011., p.459.
(89) See Appendix D for a short response to the question “How to be saved?” adapted from Habermas, Gary R., and Mike Licona. *The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2004., p.246-247.

Bibliography

Bavinck, Herman, and John Bolt. 2011. *Reformed Dogmatics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011.

Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2007.

Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN.: B & H Academic, 2009.

Carson, D. A. ed. *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015.

Douglas, J. D., Merrill C. Tenney, and Moisés. Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. [Rev. ed.]. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2011.

Enns, Paul P. *The Moody Handbook of Theology: Revised and Expanded*. Chicago, IL:
Moody Publishers, 2014.

Gardner, Paul. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995.

Groothuis, Douglas R. *Christian Apologetics: A comprehensive Case for Biblical Faith*. [2nd ed.]. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2022.

Grudem, Wayne A. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand
Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000.

Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*, 5th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012.

Habermas, Gary R., and Mike Licona. *The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2004.

Nelson's Complete Book Of Bible Maps And Charts, 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010.

Nelson, Thomas. *NIV Chronological Study Bible*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2014.

Packer, J. I. *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1993.

Pate, C. Marvin. *The Writings of John: A Survey of the Gospel, Epistles, and Apocalypse*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011.

Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008.

Stanley, Charles F. C*harles Stanley's Handbook for Christian living: Biblical Answers to Life's Tough Questions*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2008.

Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus, 2nd Edition: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020.

Appendix A

The Resurrection & Ascension
(Bible Passages - BSB translation)

Matthew

The Resurrection

(Mark 16:1–8; Luke 24:1–12; John 20:1–9)

28 1After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary
Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb.

2Suddenly there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended
from heaven, rolled away the stone, and sat on it. 3His appearance was like
lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. 4The guards trembled in fear
of him and became like dead men.

5But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are
looking for Jesus, who was crucified. 6He is not here; He has risen, just as He
said! Come, see the place where He lay. 7Then go quickly and tell His
disciples, ‘He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee.
There you will see Him.’ See, I have told you.”

8So they hurried away from the tomb in fear and great joy, and ran to tell His
disciples. 9Suddenly Jesus met them and said, “Greetings!” They came to
Him, grasped His feet, and worshiped Him. 10“Do not be afraid,” said Jesus.
“Go and tell My brothers to go to Galilee. There they will see Me.”

The Report of the Guards

11While the women were on their way, some of the guards went into the city
and reported to the chief priests all that had happened. 12And after the chief
priests had met with the elders and formed a plan, they gave the soldiers a
large sum of money 13and instructed them: “You are to say, ‘His disciples
came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep.’ 14If this report
reaches the governor, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.”

15So the guards took the money and did as they were instructed. And this
account has been circulated among the Jews to this very day.

The Great Commission

(Mark 16:14–18)

16 Meanwhile, the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain Jesus had
designated. 17 When they saw Him, they worshiped Him, but some doubted.

18 Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth
has been given to Me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations,
baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy
Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you. And
surely I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Mark

The Resurrection

(Matthew 28:1–10; Luke 24:1–12; John 20:1–9)

16 1 When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of
James, and Salome bought spices so they could go and anoint the body of
Jesus. 2 Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they went to
the tomb. 3 They were asking one another, “Who will roll away the stone from
the entrance of the tomb?” 4 But when they looked up, they saw that the
stone had been rolled away, even though it was extremely large.

5 When they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white
robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed. 6 But he said to them,
“Do not be alarmed. You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was
crucified. He has risen! He is not here! See the place where they put Him.
7 But go, tell His disciples and Peter, ‘He is going ahead of you into Galilee.
There you will see Him, just as He told you.’ ”

8 So the women left the tomb and ran away, trembling and bewildered. And in
their fear they did not say a word to anyone.

Luke

The Resurrection

(Matthew 28:1–10; Mark 16:1–8; John 20:1–9)

24 1On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women
came to the tomb, bringing the spices they had prepared. 2They found the
stone rolled away from the tomb, 3but when they entered, they did not find
the body of the Lord Jesus. 4While they were puzzling over this, suddenly two
men in radiant apparel stood beside them.

5As the women bowed their faces to the ground in terror, the two men asked
them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? 6He is not here; He
has risen! Remember how He told you while He was still in Galilee: 7‘The Son
of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and
on the third day rise again.’ ”

8Then they remembered His words. 9And when they returned from the tomb,
they reported all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. 10It was
Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women
with them who told this to the apostles. 11But their words seemed like
nonsense to them, and they did not believe the women.

12Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. And after bending down and
seeing only the linen cloths, he went away, wondering to himself what had
happened.

The Road to Emmaus

(Mark 16:12–13)

13That same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about
seven miles from Jerusalem. 14They were talking with each other about
everything that had happened. 15And as they talked and deliberated, Jesus
Himself came up and walked along with them. 16But their eyes were kept
from recognizing Him.

17He asked them, “What are you discussing so intently as you walk along?”

They stood still, with sadness on their faces. 18One of them, named Cleopas,
asked Him, “Are You the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the
things that have happened there in recent days?”

19“What things?” He asked.

“The events involving Jesus of Nazareth,” they answered. “This man was a prophet, powerful in speech and action before God and all the people. 20Our chief priests and rulers delivered Him up to the sentence of death, and they crucified Him. 21But we were hoping He was the One who would redeem Israel. And besides all this, it is the third day since these things took place.

22Furthermore, some of our women astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, 23but they did not find His body. They came and told us they had seen a vision of angels, who said that Jesus was alive. 24Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had described. But Him they did not see.”

25Then Jesus said to them, “O foolish ones, how slow are your hearts to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and then to enter His glory?” 27And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He explained to them what was written in all the Scriptures about Himself.

28As they approached the village where they were headed, He seemed to be going farther. 29But they pleaded with Him, “Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over.”

So He went in to stay with them. 30While He was reclining at the table with them, He took bread, spoke a blessing and broke it, and gave it to them. 31Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Jesus—and He disappeared from their sight.

32They asked each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us as He spoke with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?” 33And they got up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem.

There they found the Eleven and those with them, gathered together 34and saying, “The Lord has indeed risen and has appeared to Simon!”

35Then the two told what had happened on the road, and how they had recognized Jesus in the breaking of the bread.

Jesus Appears to the Disciples

(John 20:19–23; 1 John 1:1–4)

36While they were describing these events, Jesus Himself stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” 37But they were startled and frightened, thinking they had seen a spirit.

38“Why are you troubled,” Jesus asked, “and why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39Look at My hands and My feet. It is I Myself. Touch Me and see—for

a spirit does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.” 40And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and feet.

41While they were still in disbelief because of their joy and amazement, He asked them, “Do you have anything here to eat?” 42So they gave Him a piece of broiled fish, 43and He took it and ate it in front of them.

44Jesus said to them, “These are the words I spoke to you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about Me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms.” 45Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.

46And He told them, “This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, 47and in His name repentance and forgiveness of sins will be proclaimed to all nations, beginning in Jerusalem. 48You are witnesses of these things.

49And behold, I am sending the promise of My Father upon you. But remain in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”

The Ascension

(Mark 16:19–20; Acts 1:6–11)

50When Jesus had led them out as far as Bethany, He lifted up His hands and blessed them. 51While He was blessing them, He left them and was carried up into heaven. 52And they worshiped Him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, 53praising God continually in the temple.

Acts 1:1-11

Acts

Prologue

(Luke 1:1–4)

1 1In my first book, O Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do
and to teach, 2until the day He was taken up to heaven, after giving
instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles He had chosen. 3After His
suffering, He presented Himself to them with many convincing proofs that He
was alive. He appeared to them over a span of forty days and spoke about
the kingdom of God.

4And while they were gathered together, He commanded them: “Do not
leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift the Father promised, which you have
heard Me discuss. 5For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will
be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

The Ascension

(Mark 16:19–20; Luke 24:50–53)

6So when they came together, they asked Him, “Lord, will You at this time
restore the kingdom to Israel?”

7 Jesus replied, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has
fixed by His own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit
comes upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea
and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

9 After He had said this, they watched as He was taken up, and a cloud hid
Him from their sight. 10 They were looking intently into the sky as He was
going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. 11 “Men
of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This
same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the
same way you have seen Him go into heaven.”

John

The Resurrection

(Matthew 28:1–10; Mark 16:1–8; Luke 24:1–12)

20 1 Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary
Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from
the entrance. 2 So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple,
the one whom Jesus loved. “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb,” she
said, “and we do not know where they have put Him!”

3 Then Peter and the other disciple set out for the tomb. 4 The two were
running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb
first. 5 He bent down and looked in at the linen cloths lying there, but he did
not go in.

6 Simon Peter arrived just after him. He entered the tomb and saw the linen
cloths lying there. 7 The cloth that had been around Jesus’ head was rolled up,
lying separate from the linen cloths. 8 Then the other disciple, who had
reached the tomb first, also went in. And he saw and believed. 9 For they still
did not understand from the Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.

Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

(Mark 16:9–11)

10 Then the disciples returned to their homes. 11 But Mary stood outside the
tomb weeping. And as she wept, she bent down to look into the tomb, 12 and
she saw two angels in white sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at
the head and the other at the feet.

13 “Woman, why are you weeping?” they asked.

“Because they have taken my Lord away,” she said, “and I do not know where they have put Him.”

14When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there; but she did not recognize that it was Jesus.

15“Woman, why are you weeping?” Jesus asked. “Whom are you seeking?”

Thinking He was the gardener, she said, “Sir, if you have carried Him off, tell me where you have put Him, and I will get Him.”

16Jesus said to her, “Mary.”

She turned and said to Him in Hebrew, “Rabboni!” (which means “Teacher”).

17“Do not cling to Me,” Jesus said, “for I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go and tell My brothers, ‘I am ascending to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God.’ ”

18Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord!” And she told them what He had said to her.

Jesus Appears to the Disciples

(Luke 24:36–49; 1 John 1:1–4)

19It was the first day of the week, and that very evening, while the disciples were together with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them. “Peace be with you!” He said to them. 20After He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side.

The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.

21Again Jesus said to them, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent Me, so also I am sending you.” 22When He had said this, He breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. 23If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you withhold forgiveness from anyone, it is withheld.”

Jesus Appears to Thomas

24Now Thomas called Didymus, one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. 25So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!”

But he replied, “Unless I see the nail marks in His hands, and put my finger where the nails have been, and put my hand into His side, I will never believe.”

26 Eight days later, His disciples were once again inside with the doors locked,
and Thomas was with them. Jesus came and stood among them and said,
“Peace be with you.”

27 Then Jesus said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and look at My hands.
Reach out your hand and put it into My side. Stop doubting and believe.”

28 Thomas replied, “My Lord and my God!”

29 Jesus said to him, “Because you have seen Me, you have believed; blessed
are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

The Purpose of John’s Book

30 Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which
are not written in this book. 31 But these are written so that you may believe
that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have
life in His name.

Jesus Appears by the Sea of Tiberias

21 1 Later, by the Sea of Tiberias, Jesus again revealed Himself to the
disciples. He made Himself known in this way: 2 Simon Peter, Thomas called
Didymus, Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two
other disciples were together. 3 Simon Peter told them, “I am going fishing.”

“We will go with you,” they said. So they went out and got into the boat, but
caught nothing that night.

4 Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not
recognize that it was Jesus. 5 So He called out to them, “Children, do you
have any fish?”

“No,” they answered.

6 He told them, “Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find
some.” So they cast it there, and they were unable to haul it in because of
the great number of fish.

7 Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” As soon as
Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment (for he
had removed it) and jumped into the sea. 8 The other disciples came ashore
in the boat. They dragged in the net full of fish, for they were not far from
land, only about a hundred yards.

9When they landed, they saw a charcoal fire there with fish on it, and some bread.

10Jesus told them, “Bring some of the fish you have just caught.” 11So Simon Peter went aboard and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many, the net was not torn.

12“Come, have breakfast,” Jesus said to them. None of the disciples dared to ask Him, “Who are You?” They knew it was the Lord. 13Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and He did the same with the fish.

14This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after He was raised from the dead.

Jesus and Peter

15When they had finished eating, Jesus asked Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love Me more than these?”

“Yes, Lord,” he answered, “You know I love You.”

Jesus replied, “Feed My lambs.”

16Jesus asked a second time, “Simon son of John, do you love Me?”

“Yes, Lord,” he answered, “You know I love You.”

Jesus told him, “Shepherd My sheep.”

17Jesus asked a third time, “Simon son of John, do you love Me?”

Peter was deeply hurt that Jesus had asked him a third time, “Do you love Me?”

“Lord, You know all things,” he replied. “You know I love You.”

Jesus said to him, “Feed My sheep.

18Truly, truly, I tell you, when you were young, you dressed yourself and walked where you wanted; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.” 19Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God.

And after He had said this, He told him, “Follow Me.”

Jesus and the Beloved Disciple

20Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them. He was
the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper to ask, “Lord, who
is going to betray You?” 21When Peter saw him, he asked, “Lord, what about
him?”

22Jesus answered, “If I want him to remain until I return, what is that to you?
You follow Me!” 23Because of this, the rumor spread among the brothers that
this disciple would not die. However, Jesus did not say that he would not die,
but only, “If I want him to remain until I return, what is that to you?”

24This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who has written them
down. And we know that his testimony is true.

25There are many more things that Jesus did. If all of them were written
down, I suppose that not even the world itself would have space for the
books that would be written.

Appendix B

The Resurrection to The Ascension			Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
AD 30		Vicinity of				
Dawn of the First Day (Sunday, a.k.a. the “Lord’s Day”)	(1)Women come to the tomb	Jerusalem	28:1-8	16:1-8	24:1-11	20:1-2
	(2)Peter and John visit tomb				24:12	20:3-10
	(3)Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene	Jerusalem		16:9-11		20:11-18
	(4)Jesus appears to the other women	Jerusalem	28:9-10			
	(5)Roman guards report of the resurrection		28:11-15			

Sunday afternoon	(6)Jesus reveals Himself to two disciples en route to Emmaus			16:12-13	24:13-35	
Late Sunday	(7)Jesus appears to ten disciples without Thomas	Jerusalem			24:36-43	20:19-25
A Week Later	(8)Appearance to the disciples with Thomas				24:44-49	20:26-31
During 40-day-period, before Ascension	(9)Jesus shows Himself to seven disciples by Sea of Galilee	Galilee				21:1-25
	(10)The Great Commission		28:16-20	16:14-18		
	(11)The Ascension	Mount Olivet		16:19-20	24:50-53 Acts 1:3-8	

Appendix C

The Resurrection Appearances of Jesus Christ								
Appearance	Place	Time	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Acts	1 Cor.
At the empty tomb	Jerusalem	Resurrection Sunday	28:1-10	16:1-8	24:1-12	20:1-9		
To Mary Magdalene at tomb	Jerusalem	Resurrection Sunday		16:9-11		20:11-18		
To other women	Jerusalem	Resurrection	28:9-10					

		Sunday						
To two disciples going to Emmaus	Road to Emmaus	Resurrection Sunday		16:12-13	24:13-32			
To Peter	Jerusalem	Resurrection Sunday			24:34			15:5
To the ten disciples in the upper room	Jerusalem	Resurrection Sunday			24:36-43	20:19-25		
To the eleven disciples in the upper room	Jerusalem	Following Sunday		16:14		20:26-31		15:5
To seven disciples fishing	Sea of Galilee	Some time later				21:1-23		
To the 11 disciples on a mountain	Galilee	Some time later	28:16-20	16:15-18				
To more than 500	Unknown	Some time later						15:6
To James (half-brother of Jesus)	Unknown	Some time later						15:7
To his disciples at his ascension	Mount of Olives	40 days after Jesus' resurrection			24:44-49		1:3-8	
To Paul	Damascus	Several year later					9:1-19; 22:3-16; 26:9-18	9:1

Appendix D

How To Be Saved
(a)

1. All people are under God's wrath, since all of us fail to meet His standard of perfection, because God is absolutely holy (Romans 3:23).
2. The penalty for sin, under which we all are, is death, which is eternal separation from God in hell (Romans 6:23; 2 Thessalonians 1:9; Revelation 20:15).
3. However, since Jesus loves people, He left heaven to come as 'God in the Flesh' to die for the sins of all believers (Romans 5:8; Philippians 2:7).
4. By placing our faith in Jesus Christ alone, as risen Lord, and believing that He is the only One who can save us, Jesus promises us His mercy and grants us eternal life. Good deeds (apart from Christ) cannot earn our salvation. Only by faith in what Christ has already accomplished for us on the cross, are we saved.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus,
I come to You as a broken sinner with a repentant heart.
My sins are many, and I have sinned against You.
I acknowledge that on my own, I cannot earn my salvation.
I believe that You came as 'God in the Flesh' to atone for all my sins.
You did this for me, by dying on the cross, rising three days later,
ascending to heaven and sending the Holy Spirit.
I come to You in humble submission, as Your child, Lord Jesus,
and embrace You as my personal Lord and Savior.
Amen.

(a) Adapted from Habermas, Gary R., and Mike Licona. *The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2004., p.246-247.

Amen.